THE TWO SHREDS OF HAIR.

BY MRS. D. ELLEN GOODMAN.

A SIMPLE lock of hair—glossy and black as night—coiled into a delicate curl, and nestled down in the folds of this snowy paper, like the wing of a raven resting upon a fleecy cloud! A single tress of jetty hair, soft and silken—strange that it should thus touch the chain of memory link by link till it vibrates almost painfully—strange that it should awaken such emotions, and cause my heart to beat thus heavily. And yet it is not very strange after all; for the pale, fair fingers that placed this little treasure in mine, and the fairer brow that once wore the black lock, have long been cold in death.

Sweet Caroline—thine was a bright but brief existence. Too gentle and pure for this dark world, thy spirit early plumed its wings for Heaven. She was a tall, graceful girl, with a brow of marble pureness, and an eye softer than the young gazelle's. I have often gazed into those dark, gentle orbs, and tried to fathom their deep and wonderful expression; but I could not. There was something in their glance, though they beamed only in love and trustfulness, something which was not of earth. There was always a rose tinge upon her cheek, and a deeper dye on either lip; and then the long, jetty, shining braids of her hair twined so gracefully about her fine head, and their deep shadows made the whiteness of her brow and neck almost dazzling. Yes—she was *beautiful*, and each low tone of her soft voice fell upon the ear like the trembling echo of a harp, musical and thrilling.

Her home was in the bosom of bright, fair Connecticut; and its green hills and flowery vales, with the melody of its gliding streamlets, had been her companions, and the music she loved; and from the sweet influences surrounding her had her soul taken a tinge of romance and of sadness, which made the light of her lovely face all the more attractive and winning. At last my own dear friend left the home of her girlhood, and left her girlhood too. She stood at the holy altar with the chosen of her young heart, and spake the solemn vow which made her another's. A tear-drop dimmed her eye, and a paleness came over her cheek as she stooped to imprint upon her sick mother's brow the parting kiss; and her breath was quick and almost suffocating as she unlocked the entwining arms of her only sister from her neck, and turned from her anxious, tearful face. But a low voice whose faintest tones was melody to her trusting soul, soon banished the glistening gems from her cheeks and brought back the sunshine of joy to her drooping eyes. The dear one came in all her loveliness, and with her bright dreams to our own beautiful village—to be one among us—and now face to face we whispered of the past, and wreathed bright garlands of hope for the future.

Months passed on, and the light of her eye was yet undimmed—ay, it gathered intenser brightness. The glow on her cheek became richer, and I sometimes fancied the sweet, gentle voice grew tremulous and weaker; though I hoped it was a mere fancy. Summer had again thrown her wreath of many flowers over the brow of nature, and each sheltered nook rung with the echo of fairy music, while the green valleys and sunny hill-sides blushed and smiled beneath their burden of clustering blossoms. There was a smile too upon the lips of the young bride, as she walked forth to inhale the delicious odor that filled the air almost to heaviness. But her step was not as light, her heart not as joyous as in the happy past. A cold and withered hand was upon her heart-strings, and soon she yielded to its merciless touch. Like a flower she faded, as silently, as peacefully. We hardly knew that death was by till she had ceased to breathe, and lay cold and still, but oh, *how* beautiful in his icy arms. There was a crushing of hearts that had bowed to an earthly idol, a withering of blissful dreams, a bending to earth of broken spirits. There was an infant wail; but the tremulous cry fell unheeded upon the young mother's ear. Her quivering lips had pressed the last cold kiss upon its tender brow, and now she had tuned her harp in Heaven. It was a rural spot near her childhood haunts where they laid the lovely clay to rest; and in a few months the dead babe slept upon the mother's bosom, while over the blossom and the bud flowers less beautiful, but frail like them, shed their soft perfume. She has passed from the dark and cheerless world, but the gentle memory of my youthful schoolmate, my chosen friend, is yet fresh and green in my heart of hearts.

With this long, soft curl of *auburn* came a thousand bright and happy thoughts. It is not exactly auburn; yet there is a mingling of *gold* with the rich brown; and I fancy now that I see the slender thing waving with its fellow ringlets over a pure, fair forehead, shading eyes of deepest grey. With this tress comes to my mind a snowy cottage nestled within a shadowy, grassy vale, at the foot of that tall, bold mountain in good, dear Vermont. The air is so pure and fresh, and the summer breeze so soft and musical on that mountain's summit, and then the broad, green valley below, with its clustering white cottages and its velvet lawns, and the winding river, whose silver waters sparkle in the sunlight—all, *all* unite to make it one of nature's "beauty spots." That summer was a bright, a happy one which I spent beneath the roof of that sweet little cottage, with her from whose sunny brow I plucked this trembling little prisoner. Winder, that is the name of my mountain nymph. She is a fairy girl, and the music of her mellow voice has

often rung around that mountain side and through the shady glens, till its soft echo came floating back in the melody of the rippling waters, and the quivering strains of the spring warblers that shook their bright wings and soared Heavenward till lost to the watching eye.

Dear Winder! though the smile on her full, red lips is ever fresh and dimpling; though the light of her soft grey eye seems ever clear and steady, and the glow on her cheek unfading, yet there *was* a time when lip, and cheek, and brow were marble white, when the sunny eyes were dimmed with thickly coming tears, and the heart throbbed in pain and agony. And those who watch her closely now, those who watch each varying expression of her bright face, may see a sadness in tne playful smile, and a melancholy mingling in the deep light of her grey eye. Winder was very young when she gave her warm, loving heart away; and he who took the gift and gladly gave his own in exchange, was worthy the priceless gem. A few short months they were very happy, and wandered hand in hand over that mountain's brow, and drank in the glories of the surrounding scene. But at last the youth grew sick, and his lofty soul wandered in darkness. A deathly paleness sat upon his noble forehead, and a wild light was in his dark eye. Her name was ever on his parched lips, and he was again wandering over the hill-side and deep vales with her he loved. She was near, and it was her hand that smoothed the jetty locks from his fevered cheek, and she whispered gently in her subdued and trembling tones to his heart. He heard her at last, and with a faint smile coming over his ashy lip, he fell asleep.

Poor Winder! she was young yet for *such* sorrow, and it fell heavily upon her heart; and though as time rolled on, the bloom returned to her pale cheek, and health to her frame, she has never forgotten that manly form, nor the music of that voice. She is a dear, good girl, and her auburn locks have often been pressed by the palsied hand of age, while a blessing on her head has come from the heart which four-score years had not chilled. I well remember *one* personage, the most remarkable in my youthful mind of any in that pleasant little Eden-flower vale. She was a very old woman, and occupied the ancient *white house* across the narrow, wooden bridge, only a few rods from Winder's cottage. The building was almost as aged as its solitary inmate, and its dark brown walls bent over the green bank, and seemed to totter in every breeze that swept over the flat roof, while the tall, old oaks that towered around it had almost forgotten to clothe themselves in the fresh, green livery of their young days, and stood in leafless grandeur like sentinels about the dilapidated mansion. It had been a structure of elegance once, and its now rusty sides had glittered in the sunbeams the proudest and lordliest dwelling for miles around. It was the only *painted* house in all that region, and that gave it the title which it still bore, though nearly half a century back the brown walls peeped through their covering of white, and the last vestige of paint disappeared.

I well remember the first time I ascended the steep, grassy bank, and trod the narrow, moss-grown footpath leading to the old hall door. I clung to the hand of my smiling companion, and trembled I scarce knew why. But there was something about that strange old house that looked so frowningly down upon us, that made the warm blood chill about my heart. We passed through two or three large, vacant rooms, our footsteps echoing along the empty windings, and falling upon *my* ear like a death-knell, till at last in a small apartment that contained but little to make life pleasant, we found the old lady, and I started back as she arose from her seat and approached to meet us, with her bony hand extended, and her blue eyes, which seemed utterly rayless, directed toward the spot where we stood. She was bent nearly double, and it was with difficulty she hobbled along, calling out in her shrill, sharp voice—

"Is it you, Winder child; and who, pray, have you here?" She laid her skinny fingers upon my arm and peered into my pale face with those strange little eyes, until I turned away in an agony of fear from her gaze. The poor old woman was very deaf, and the bright, laughing lips of Winder approached her ear, while in her clear, bird-like voice she screamed out—

"Good mother, this is a dear friend whom I call sister. She has come far to visit our mountain home, and we have called to see you, and bring you this nice fruit!"

The old mother was satisfied, for a faint smile broke over her livid lips, and I fancied a ray of light came to her dull eyes. She took the little basket and crept back to her seat, while we with her permission wandered up the broken stair-way, and over the forsaken rooms of that ancient house.

We often visited the poor old creature after that, and I have gazed over her wrinkled face and wondered if the glow of beauty ever lit up those features, and if that wandering eye ever danced in sunny light. The weary frame is crumbling now to its mother dust; but perhaps the spirit that inhabited that crumbling temple is clothed in a beauty far surpassing earth's loveliest visions. But where has this little ringlet of auburn hair led me?

THE FIVE DOLLAR BILL.

AN AUTOBIOGRAPHY.

NO. I.—THE HARD LANDLORD.

BY HARRY SUNDERLAND.

I HAVE seen hard service, and am, in consequence, much worn and faded. Were I to relate all I have witnessed in my passage through life, the story would fill volumes, and make one of the most interesting and instructive histories that ever was written; and this service I may one day render to mankind, unless unfitted for the task by the feebleness of old age that I perceive already beginning to steal upon me. At present I only intend jotting down, in a loose manner, the incidents of a single week; premising that I belong to a respectable family; am a lover of truth, and bear upon my face no promise that will not be fully paid on demand.

I had slept snugly in the pocket-book of a certain individual well known in the good city of Brotherly Love, for about a month, in company with a large number of my relatives, some near of kin, and others so remote that I had not before even heard of their existence. We had a pleasant time, and spent the greater portion of it in comparing notes.

One morning, an individual whose voice I had often heard during the month of repose, came into my owner's office and said, in a hesitating and humble way—

"I am sorry to trouble you so often; but necessity compels me to be urgent. If you will settle my bill to-day you will confer a great favor."

At least a dozen times had I heard the same request in the same voice, and the reply had been—

"I can't attend to you to-day," or

"I've no money to spare," or

"Call some other time," or

"Don't come here with your bill so often. I'll pay it before long."

On the present occasion, there was something in the face or tones of the applicant that my owner could not resist, for he put his hand reluctantly into his pocket, and drawing out his distended wallet, in which I lay, said, in a very unpleasant and insulting manner—

"You're the most troublesome person about your bills of any that I have dealings with. I'll take good care not to make any more with you. Here, write a receipt."

While saying this, he was turning over bill after bill. At last, selecting me, and looking at me for some moments, as if he hated to give me up, he threw me upon the table where the man sat writing.

"There!" he uttered petulently, and folding up his wallet, thrust it back into his pocket.

I must own that I was no little surprised at finding myself adequate to the discharge of a bill for which the man had been asking at least a month, and the payment of which had frequently been denied on the ground of want of funds, while I lay snugly in the debtor's pocket in company with twenty or thirty relatives, some with a value four times that attached to me.

I looked with some interest at the man who had now became my possessor. A glance told me that he was in humble circumstances. His dress was mean, and his face had a care worn expression. I have been a great deal among the poor, and know a really poor man at the first glance. Not all are poor whose dress is common. Some who dress well know more of the real stings of poverty than some whose appearance display far less of taste and comfort. The countenance generally gives the true index.

The man took me up quickly, and after a hurried glance at my face, crushed me up in his hard, horny-like hand, and saying with a bow—

"Thank you, sir," which was merely answered by a grunt, turned away and departed. He did not linger by the way, nor release the vice-like grip with which he had clutched me. A walk of about ten minutes brought him to a small shop, which he entered. A pale-faced girl stood leaning upon the counter. She turned her eyes upon the man, as he came in. Hope and fear were blended in the expression of her countenance.

"There," said the man, "is your money." And he opened the door of the prison where I lay, unfolded me, and gave me to the girl. "I am sorry," he added, "that I could not give it to you before, for I know you need it. I wish all who owe me were as willing to pay as I am."

A smile lighted up the wan face of the girl, as she took the money, and said—

"I would not have asked you for it so often; but you know——"

"Oh, yes, I know as well as you do," replied the man, in a kind voice, "that every dollar you earn is needed before your work is done; and it has grieved me that I could not pay you sooner. But, when people who owe me, wont pay, how can I pay? Ah, me!" and he sighed—"ah, me! If those who have plenty would only consider those who have to depend for daily bread upon their daily labor, it would be better for the world, I'm thinking. The man who owes a dollar, and keeps a dollar lying idle in his pocket, I don't call an honest man at heart."

The girl took out a purse, and after carefully folding me up with her thin, delicate fingers, placed me therein. My companions I found were a small silver coin of the lowest denomination, and a penny. I felt a strong desire to know more of this young girl, in whose face there was an expression of suffering, blended with patience, though little of hope in this world; but I was disappointed. After leaving the shop of the man from whom she had received me, she walked for some distance; then entering a store, she purchased several articles of food, and handing me over the counter, desired that the two dollars her mother owed, and also the price of the things just bought, might be taken out. I was laid in the grocer's drawer, from which a dollar and a half were taken and given in change, and then the girl left. While I lay thinking about her, and pitying the condition of the poor and friendless, the till in which I had been deposited was opened and I was again passed to a new owner, who placed me in his pocket-book, after a glance at my face, which gave me an opportunity to look at him. There was nothing particularly remarkable in his countenance, nor in his appearance. I had seen many better looking men, but the outside is not always a true exponent of what is within.

All day I reposed in this man's pocket. Toward evening he went home to his family, which I found to consist of his wife and two daughters. The girls were just verging into woman's estate. After tea, they drew around a centre-table, and one of the girls read for an hour. Then they talked for awhile about the book, after which the conversation took a more varied turn.

"Didn't I see you passing along Pine street to-day?" asked the father, in a pause, speaking to one of his daughters.

"I don't know," was replied.

"Were you in Pine street?"

"Yes, sir; about three o'clock. But where were you, if you saw me?"

"On my way into Southwark on business. I saw you crossing Fifth street some distance ahead of me. Where were you going?"

"To see old Mrs. Glendy about some plain sewing for mother. Poor woman! She seems very unhappy."

"Ah! What's the matter?"

"She told me that they found it very hard to get along. That her daughter's health was so poor that she couldn't work much over half of her time, and then was not able to get her money punctually. She said that, light as their rent was, they always found it difficult to lay by enough to meet it, and that their landlord troubled them with threats that made them very unhappy."

"That's bad, indeed," said the father. "Did she say how much they owed their landlord?"

"Two months rent, only, and that can't be much. I don't believe they pay over two or three dollars for the room they occupy."

I felt the hand of the man in whose pocket I was lying, fingering the little repository in which I had been snugly stowed. The conversation went on, and presently the pocket-book was drawn forth, and opened.

"I collected five dollars to-day from a man who didn't mean to pay me, I verily believe," said the father. "But, I happened to catch him with his till open, and a five dollar bill so plainly visible that there was no chance for him to make his usual statement of not having any money in the house. So he paid me with as good a grace as he could muster.

"Suppose we let this five dollar bill go into the old lady's hands. I reckon we can spare it. What do you all say? It's almost as good as picked up in the street, any how."

"Oh, let us do so by all means," said the wife.

And the daughters warmly seconded the proposal.

The pocket-book was opened, and I taken out and handed to one of the girls, who agreed to go on the next day and make glad the old lady's heart by transferring me into her keeping. In the meantime I was placed, quite tenderly, in the maiden's purse, where I lay snugly enough, all alone in my glory, until about ten o'clock on the next morning, when my fair possessor went forth on her errand of mercy.

An old woman, with many age-marks and care-lines upon her face, welcomed with a smile, meant to be cheerful, the angel of mercy who had come to visit her.

"Have you brought the work your ma was to cut out for me?" she asked, as she handed the young lady a chair.

"No," she replied, "mother will not have it ready before to-morrow. Then I will bring it, or else send it down by a servant."

"Very well," said the woman, a slight shade of disappointment in her voice. "I was in hopes you had brought it along, as I find myself idle to-day."

"Be thankful, then, for a day of rest, Mrs. Glendy," said the young lady. "You need it, I am sure."

"Rest, child!" replied the woman, with some bitterness. "That is what I can't afford to take, and it will do me little good to sit idle, and expect every instant our landlord's collector to come in for the rent."

"How much do you owe him?"

"Just five dollars. But Heaven only knows where it is to come from! We haven't over a dollar in the world. Ellen—poor child! she is more fit to be in bed than anywhere else—has gone out for work; but after she gets it and does it, there is no certainty when the money will come."

"Five dollars," remarked my fair possessor, and she put her hand upon her purse. I expected to be produced; but no; I was not disturbed in my quiet nook. "Who is your landlord?" she asked.

"Mr. ———. He lives in Arch street."

"Oh, yes! I know who he is very well. Is it possible that he troubles you for so small an amount?"

"He! Yes, indeed! He's the closest landlord I ever had."

Just then the door opened, and the daughter entered. I was not a little surprised to find in her the poor young girl who had owned me for so short a period on the day before; but pleasure at the thought of being about to render her an important service, mingled with my surprise. The work for which she had gone was not ready, and she could not conceal her disappointment.

"Never mind," said the young lady in whose pocket I lay, "I will go directly home, and get mother to prepare the work she wants you to do, and send some of it down in the course of an hour."

She arose and left them, bearing with her many thanks for their kindness. I must own that I felt disappointed at her not handing me over, and making the heart of these poor people glad. Why she had not done this, I was at a loss to conjecture. She had certainly left home for that very purpose. I was not long, however, in doubt, for her quick feet were bent toward that part of the town where their landlord resided, and in a short space of time after leaving their humble abode, she was at the elegant residence of the man, who owned the comfortless house where they lived.

When the poor woman mentioned her londlord's name, I knew into what capacious pocket-book I was destined to be transferred; it was the same in which I had idly reposed for the last month. And here I soon found myself. Not a single one of my old companions were gone; but I found many strange faces among them.

"He's no poorer, certainly, by that transaction," I said to myself, as the leather folds closed around me, "and other hearts are lighter, and yet to be made lighter."

The old fellow didn't remember my face—notwithstanding he regarded me with the kind expression of a friend—but I knew him very well.

"Now for another long resting spell," I said.

THE FIVE DOLLAR BILL.

NO. II—.THE SUSPECTED SERVANT.

BY HARRY SUNDERLAND.

I HAD expected, as I have said, to have remained a long while in the pocket of the hard landlord; but I was mistaken in this opinion; for an hour had scarcely passed after he received me, when his wife entered the room. She was equipped for a shopping excursion, and wanted money.

"How much?" he asked, in reluctant tones.

"Give me fifty dollars."

"Fity dollars!" replied the husband. "What do you want with so much?"

"I've got a great many things to get."

"I can't spare fifty dollars."

"Nor fifty cents neither, I suppose. But, I can't help that. You must give me what I want."

"Won't twenty-five do?"

"No. I must have have at least fifty."

The man really groaned in spirit.

"I think you are extravagant, my dear," he said.

"And I think you are miserly, my dear," she replied, half laughing, half serious. "But come, let me have the money; time is passing, and I have a good many places to go."

"I can spare you thirty-five," said the husband.

"But I want fifty. No, let me see——"

"Won't forty do?"

"No; I forgot a shawl that I must get for Aggy. Make it seventy."

"Seventy! No—no. It's no use to talk. I can't let you have that much to-day."

The pocket-book now saw the light, and, with nine others of a like denomination, were removed therefrom and handed to the lady, who took us, and said nothing of the extra twenty. That was only a *ruse* to enable her to get what she wanted.

In half an hour from this time, I was in the money drawer of a certain dry good's dealer in Chestnut street, and half an hour after that, in the purse of a lady to whom I was given in change. She left me at a confectioner's, and the confectioner paid me, that night, to one of his workman, who handed me over to his wife. On the next morning I was taken to market and paid to a butcher. But he didn't keep me long, for laying me carelessly in his pocket-book, with one of my edges sticking out, and thrusting his book into his pocket, with an end exposed, I presented too good an opportunity for a trial of skill by one of the light-fingered gentry, and left his possession without, I presume, his being the wiser of the transaction.

The person who thus, unlawfully, became my owner, was a gentleman so far as dress and appearance were concerned. He left the market-house without waiting to see if I would be missed, and took his way toward Third street, where he exchanged me with a broker for a five dollar gold piece. The next man at the broker's counter was a poor fellow who had received his week's wages in uncurrent small bills, upon which he was obliged to lose three per cent discount. The last comer into the broker's drawer, I was the first on top, and being handy was paid out to the journeyman mechanic, who took me home and gave me to his wife. She being in a worry about something at the moment, tucked me into her bosom, without thinking what she did.

This was on Saturday. After supper that night, the man who had received me from the broker, said to his wife.

"I think we'd better pay something on our bill at the store. Its been getting heavier and heavier every week instead of lighter. I suppose we might spare three dollars, and lessen it that much every week until it is paid. I'm really out of all heart with these bills running up. We must try and pay for every thing we get, and if we haven't the money for what we happen to want, try to do without it until we have. This being forever in debt, disheartens me."

"I'm sure," said the wife, "it troubles me as much as it does you. Yes; pay three dollars by all means; and I'll try and make what's left do us until Saturday."

"Give me the bill then, and I'll go and pay three dollars out of that. We'll want the other change to use."

"The bill! what bill?" asked the wife in surprise, and with a look of bewilderment.

"The five dollar bill I gave you when I came home at dinner time. What did you do with it?"

"Yes; now I remember that you did give me a bill," said the wife, thoughtfully. "I must have put it in my little box in the bureau drawer, where I keep my change."

And she went to her little box, her bosom panting with alarm. But she did not find me there.

"I'm sure I put it here," she said. "I think I remember it distinctly. Oh, I must have put it here. I always put my money in this box."

"But where is it?" asked the husband.

"Sure enough! Where is it? I put it here; and it couldn't have gone away without hands."

"Of course not."

Meantime, the wife, who could not have been very sure about the disposition she had made of me, was rummaging in her bosom, her fingers almost touching me time after time, yet not coming into apprehensible contact.

"Maybe you put it somewhere else?" suggested the husband. "Look in the drawer."

"No! I'm sure I put it in the box." Yet, while she said this, the wife turned the drawer, in which she kept her box, all topsy turvy. She did not find the object of her anxious search.

"Look in your pocket," said the husband, upon whose forehead the drops of sweat began to stand. He had worked hard for his wages, and to lose so large a sum as I represented was no light matter for him.

"I know it isn't there. I put it in the box," replied the wife, as she turned her pockets inside out. And in a moment asked the question—

"Are you sure you gave me the money?"

"You are sure you put it in the box. If I had not given it to you, how could you have made that disposition of it? Certainly I gave it to you. I remember it as well as if it had been done but a minute ago."

"Then somebody's got it," said the wife, in a low tone, half looking over her shoulder. "Of course, if you gave it to me, I put it in the box where I always keep my money."

"It's a serious matter to accuse any one of stealing," suggested the husband.

"I know it is; but the money couldn't have gone without hands." And again she looked over her shoulder, in the direction of a young girl who was at work in the kitchen.

The husband looked worried and perplexed.

"Suppose you ask Jane if she knows anything about it," he said.

The woman, acting upon this hint, called the girl.

"Jane," she said, looking accusation at the child, "I've lost a five dollar bill. Have you seen it?"

"No, ma'am," replied the child, thus suddenly addressed, who felt that suspicion was attached to her, and could not help coloring and looking frightened and confused.

"I put it in this box," said the woman, sternly, contracting her brow, and fixing her eyes upon the girl, "and now its gone. It couldn't have walked away."

"Indeed, ma'am I haven't got it," protested Jane.

"Who said you had? You are very quick with your denial," retorted the woman. "I shall begin to think you have taken it."

"Oh, no, indeed, indeed, ma'am! I've not been near your drawer," said the girl, bursting into tears; another evidence in the eyes of her accuser that she had stolen the money.

"But didn't you find the bill on the floor?" was asked.

"Oh, no ma'am. I haven't got the bill. Indeed I haven't."

"Where is it then?"

"Indeed, ma'am, I don't know," replied the girl, weeping and wringing her hands.

"Well, I don't believe you!" retorted the woman, passionately. "Your very face and manner betray you. "I think we had better search her trunk," she added, turning to her husband.

"Do, do!" said the child. "It isn't there. You won't find it there?"

"Then where is it? you little thieving huzzy!" exclaimed the woman, losing all command of herself. "If you don't tell me this instant, I'll send for a police officer and have you taken before an alderman!"

The poor child fell upon her knees, and in an agony of tears vowed, before Heaven, that she was innocent, and implored her accuser to spare her. The man now interposed, and told the girl that he would be very sorry to think she was guilty of such a dreadful crime, and sincerely hoped that she was innocent. But that as a five dollar bill had been taken from his wife's drawer, and she was the only person in the house besides themselves, suspicion very naturally fell upon her.

"But she might have dropped it," said the girl, gaining some control over herself; "or put it in her bosom in a hurry. I remember, she thought she lost money once before, and——"

"Silence! this instant!" exclaimed the woman. "No! I put it in the box in my drawer, and somebody's taken it out. And you know who's got it too, well enough!"

It was all in vain that the poor child protested that she was innocent. Her trunk, her room, and her person were searched, and she made to bear from the excited woman all kinds of words of abuse. Of course the search was useless, for I still lay against the passion-heaving bosom of the wife. At last the husband interposed, and sent the girl to the kitchen. He was, by this time, pretty well satisfied that she hadn't the missing bill. And now commenced a search in every nook and corner of the rooms, drawers and closets up stairs and down, which was continued until bed-time, without avail. At a late hour they prepared to retire for the night.

"What's that?" said the husband, as I fell to the floor, on the woman's removing her dress, stooping and picking me up as he spoke. "The bill, as I live!"

The wife stood in utter amazement.

"And so it was in your bosom all the time!"

"Well, I declare! Now I recollect that when you gave it to me, I tucked it in my bosom. I was too busy at the time to put it away."

"I'm very sorry that you accused poor Jane," said the husband.

"So am I. But it can't be helped now."

"I really feel bad about it. Poor child! You ought to be more careful."

"I know I ought. But its too late to mend it now. It'll be a lesson to me to take better care of money another time."

"I hope it will. Has Jane gone to bed?"

"Yes. Why?"

"If she's up, you ought to let her know at once that the money's found. It will relieve her mind."

"I don't know that anything need be said about it. She's conscious of innocence, and that's enough."

"I think you ought to tell her."

"It'll be time enough to-morrow," replied the wife.

To-morrow came, and the sad looking girl prepared the breakfast. But not a word was said to her about my having been found. The fact was, the woman who had accused her was ashamed to let the girl know the truth. After breakfast Jane put on her things and went out. She did not return that night,

nor was she back on the Monday morning when I was taken away and changed at the grocer's. What further passed on the subject, of course I know not. I was but little surprised at the occurrences of Saturday night, for I had seen such things before. I have been lost pretty much in the same way more than a dozen times in my life. Once, in this city, a poor colored girl was tortured most cruelly in order to make her confess having stolen me, when I had been hurriedly laid in between two leaves of a large family Bible and forgotten. I believe I reposed there for three months before I was discovered by a young lady who was trying her lover with the Bible and a key. The person who placed me there, then recollected all about it.

THE FIVE DOLLAR BILL.

NO. III.—THE GAMBLERS.

BY HARRY SUNDERLAND.

After various changes, I was paid into the hands of a magistrate, by a poor fellow, who was thrown into costs in a petty suit; the magistrate handed me over to a constable to whom fees were due, and he exchanged me in a coffee-house, from which I went into the hands of a merchant, who gave me to his wife, and she paid me out to her milliner; the milliner sent me to market, where I passed about for a while among butchers and hucksters. During the afternoon, I was in Moyamensing prison; but the individual who took me there, sent me by the hand of an officer to his wife. She would fain have kept me, but was not able. By nightfall, I was in the pocket of a gentleman living in Walnut street. He gave a large party that evening. If I could linger to do so, I would like to describe the brilliant spectacle I witnessed. There was a large assemblage of beauty and fashion. Everytning was in the most costly and elegant style.

In the crowded rooms, I several times noticed a fair, intelligent-looking young man, whose restless eye, and frequent quick unconscious movements, too surely indicated a mind that was ill at ease. He danced, occasionally, but without taking much interest in what he was doing. I missed him at least two hours before the company dispersed.

On the next morning, I went again to the market-house. There I got into the pocket of the keeper of a large hotel, on Chestnut street, and, towards mid-day, he changed a twenty dollar bill for the restless young man I had noticed at the party, on the previous evening, and I passed into his hands. In his pocket-book, I met several old friends, with whom I spent the rest of the day, relating my own, or listening to their adventures.

About eight o'clock that evening, the young man in whose pocket I was at rest, arose from the bed upon which he had been lying in his room at the hotel, and for at least an hour paced, uneasily, the floor. From his manner it was evident that he was debating some question of interest, and that there was a severe struggle in his mind. Once during his uneasy perambulations, he sat down at a table, and taking out his pocket-book, carefully counted over its contents. The whole sum, my humble self included, was just four hundred and thirty dollars. The precise knowledge of what his pocket-book contained did not appear to afford him much pleasure.

"Four hundred and thirty dollars!" he muttered, as he crowded us back into our repository, and thrusting that, with an impatient gesture, into his pocket, arose and commenced walking the floor again. "Four hundred and thirty dollars!" he repeated, with much bitterness. "It was over four thousand last night. But what was that? I had twenty thousand entrusted to me; and here is all that remains. Accursed infatuation! Knowing the danger, why was I mad enough to tempt my own ruin? But it is too late now. One more effort to recover myself—one more fierce struggle—and all will be over. Dare I hope for success? Oh, if fortune would smile upon me but this once, and restore me what I have lost, that I might step back, trembling, from this gulf that opens darkly at my feet!"

The unhappy young man was deeply moved. He sunk into a chair, and burying his face in his hands, gave way to the weakness of tears. A stern calmness succeeded to this.

"Now for the last throw," he said, rising up, with a countenance from which had fled all traces of emotion. Going to his trunk, he took therefrom a pistol, and, after carefully loading and capping it, replaced the weapon with the single remark.

"That will do its work well, if needed."

He then left the hotel and walked with a rapid step for a few squares, when he stopped at a large and handsome dwelling, the whole front of which was dark. He pulled the bell; paused a moment; pulled again, and again paused. At the third distinct ring, the door flew open, and he passed into the dark vestibule. When the inner door turned on its hinges—but not until the outer one had been carefully closed—a flood of light burst upon him. He moved through richly furnished and brilliantly lighted rooms, without so much as casting a glance at those within them, or noticing the elegance and taste with which they were fitted up. I had been there before, as well as he, and had witnessed scenes which, if related, would make the reader's heart grow cold. I knew whither his steps were tending, and the purpose in his mind, as he ascended to the third story; but felt how great and almost fatal was the error he committed, when he paused at a bar, liberally furnished with everything to eat and drink, and swallowed a large glass of brandy to steady his quivering nerves. I knew that the artificial composure to be derived from brandy would not be sufficient to sustain him to a safe issue in the struggle before him. He needed the coolness of a well balanced mind.

In the bar-room he took a few turns across the floor, until he began to feel the effects of the brandy, and then went deliberately to a large apartment in the front of the building, in which several persons were engaged at cards. He was not long in meeting with what he sought—a partner. The individual with whom he sat down to play was no stranger to me—he was one of the principals of the establishment

and a man who rarely trusted to either chance or skill in a game at cards, and who rarely lost when he played.

The unhappy young man saw not the odds that were against him. He played with unusual skill, showing himself to be a perfect master of the game—it was in this skill that he fondly trusted—but what is skill opposed to such an antagonist as he had, who knew the back of every card in his adversary's hand as well as he knew the faces of those in his own. Steadily the tide of fortune went against him, until he played with a recklessness and desperation that made his ruin only the more certain and easy of accomplishment. An hour from the time he entered that place, he rushed from it, without a dollar in his pocket. The consequences he had dreaded, too surely came. I know not whether he committed the still madder act he contemplated.

All human sympathies must have been dead in the heart of the wretch who so coldly and wickedly robbed that unhappy young man, or he could not have looked upon his pale despairing face, mild eyes, and bloodless lips, when the last card, upon which he had staked his last hope, turned up against him, without restoring what he had won. But he looked away from that face, and let his eyes rest upon his booty. The sight of that held down all weak emotions.

"Another fly has burnt his wings in your candle, I see," said a confederate, joining the gambler after the young man had fled from the house.

"Yes; but the poor devil was lower than I thought for. I expected at least four or five thousand more."

"How much have you won to-night?"

"Only a little over four hundred."

"Hardly worth the trouble. I got nearly four thousand out of him last night."

"Every little helps. We must take care of the small gains, as well as the large ones. But, as I have pocketed ten thousand of the money entrusted to him—ha! ha! a safe man to entrust money with, wasn't he—I don't think I need complain."

"I suppose he will blow his brains out on the strength of his successes to-night?"

"I hope so—that is, if he have any left, poor devil! The best thing a fellow like him can do, is to shuffle off this mortal coil. His head will rest easier."

"Dead men tell no tales."

"Just what I mean. Sometimes a fellow like him, after losing everything, awakens into a virtuous indignation against gentlemen of our cloth, raises a hue and cry, and then there is the deuce to pay, and all that. I guess he'll tip the trigger, though. He looks to me like a game bird."

And thus these wretches, half in jest and half in earnest, talked of the miserable victim of their infernal arts, while I was transferred from the table, where the young man had placed me, to the pocket of the gambler, where I lay undisturbed until the next night, when I witnessed other scenes in that den of crime. But the history of my week is ended.

THE ADOPTED CHILD.

BY A. C. ELLIOTT.

That was an anxious day for Mrs. Talbot, on which she was expecting her brother Reginald. Everything about the cottage was arranged as neatly as possible, and—a very unusual occurrence—all her eight little children were looking as nice and clean as if they were each the only object of her care. They seemed to be suffering rather than enjoying this unwonted tidiness; and there was great danger that, if their uncle did not soon make his appearance, all Mrs. Talbot's labor would be lost. But before she had quite put the finishing touch to her own toilet, the subdued murmur of childish voices informed her that the expected and almost dreaded personage had arrived; and hastening out, she was clasped to the breast of her only brother, for the first time for years.

Any one would have known at once that they were brother and sister, though the good-nature that beamed from his face had been exalted and purified to a much more spiritual expression in hers, and, though he was evidently some years older, there were no lines on his face like those that many cares and sorrows had traced on hers. He appeared to be one of those whose content sprang, not from rising above this lower world, but from finding abundant satisfaction in the good things of life. But, notwithstanding his want of elevation of character, he was a pleasant companion, overflowing as he was with kindness and good-nature. He did not tell his sister how changed and care-worn he thought her; neither did he ask for her husband, for he was the only one in the whole circle of his acquaintance, to whom he had a decided aversion; but he began immediately to play with the children, and to divert as much as possible all painful reminiscences by talking with the greatest rapidity.

Mrs. Talbot's story is one that has been so often told, and so much more often acted in real life, that it has become quite stale. A very pretty, gay girl, she married, against her family's consent, a man much beneath her in every respect. She was cast off by her father, and, for many years, dragged on a miserable life in poverty and distress. When her father died, Reginald, her only brother, settled upon her an annuity, just enough to keep her from want, for he did not wish that Mr. Talbot should derive any benefit from his connexion with him.

The gratitude Mrs. Talbot felt for Reginald's kindness was out of all proportion to the gift, for, little as it was for a man with his large income to bestow, it saved her from so much anxiety and distress, that she felt as though nothing could ever repay the debt. And when Mr. Churchill wrote to ask her permission to adopt one of her children, she felt that she could not refuse the request, much as it distressed her to grant it. Her heart beat painfully as she dressed them herself, and wondered anxiously on which of her darlings his choice would fall. She hoped it would be one of the boys—Sam, the eldest, or Reginald, his namesake—or even little Charley or Mary—any one, but her wild, reckless Edith, or the baby. Every one knows how a mother's heart clings to her baby; but middle-aged gentlemen seldom have the same fondness for them, and so Mr. Churchill hardly gave the chubby staring little fellow a second look; but it was precisely the forward little Edith that won his whole heart in the first ten minutes, by her confidence, her playfulness, and her incessant chattering. She declared, as soon as she was asked, her readiness to go with him in his pretty carriage, to live with him, and to be his own little girl always. Mrs. Talbot hinted in vain that one of the boys or older children would suit him better probably; but he did not like little boys, he said, and Edith was just the right age; a child of four was no longer troublesome like an infant, but yet she was young enough to learn soon to look upon her uncle's house as her only home. Mr. Churchill was very positive in his choice, and as Mrs. Talbot had resolved to consent to his request, she had nothing to do but to get her little Edith ready to go as soon as possible, as Mr. Churchill was anxious to leave after dinner, to avoid meeting Mr. Talbot, who was away for the day under pretence of a business engagement.

Edith bore the parting with great composure, telling them not to cry, that she would soon be back. As long as she was riding she was very much amused; but when the carriage stopped at the inn, and she was put to bed in a strange room, her grief was uncontrollable. They tried in vain to quiet her. All night long her uncle sat by her, wondering to see such a young child display such strength of feeling. It was not till the dim light of morning was stealing through the closed blinds, that her sobs were hushed, and she was sleeping heavily, and, as it seemed to her tired uncle, refreshingly. The slumber came just in time to prevent his fulfilling the determination he had formed in the night—to take Edith back to her mother as soon as possible

It was a long time before Edith could get used to her new home—a stately mansion, in an extensive park, at some little distance from New York. It seemed to her so lonely to have no one but her uncle to amuse her, after being accustomed to the companionship of so many children; but she did get used to it, and became exceedingly fond of Mr. Churchill, following him everywhere like his shadow. Mr. Churchill's wife was a selfish, disagreeable woman, who piqued herself not only on controlling her house, but her husband, too; and generally she succeeded

very well, but now and then she found Mr. Churchill quite unmanageable. One of these occasions was when he resolved to assist his sister, even though she persisted in living with Mr. Talbot; and another, when he informed her that he intended to adopt one of his nieces. This last step she resisted with all her might, and, when she found her efforts useless, she subsided into a state of sullen opposition, and resolved to have nothing to do with the child. It would have been well if she had been true to her determination; but she could not resist the temptation to reprove and check the little intruder on every possible occasion, till there sprang up a lasting feud between them—open and violent, on the part of Edith, and quiet and tormenting, on Mrs. Churchill's side.

As Edith grew up though, lovely, blooming and high-spirited, she saw that these quarrels seriously annoyed her uncle, who would sacrifice almost anything for peace, and so she tried to avoid her aunt as much as possible; and when she could not, to bear her rebukes without reply. This course served to render her still more disagreeable to Mrs. Churchill; but, as it pleased her uncle, Edith was contented.

Thus matters went on, till Edith had nearly reached her twenty-first year. She had been engaged since she was eighteen to Charles Devereux, a young man of good though reduced family, and of fine talents—a person who was every way agreeable to her uncle, and to whom she was very much attached. They would have been married before, but her uncle could not bear to part with her, and had exacted a promise from her not to leave him before she was twenty-one. This she had readily given; but Devereux himself complained bitterly of the delay. Time, however, effects marvellous changes, and one of the most wonderful that he produces is the disappearance of affection that we flatter ourselves is unchangeable.

Just three months before Edith's wedding day, Mr. Churchill died suddenly in a fit of apoplexy. Edith's grief was so violent and distressing that they feared for her reason; and her eldest brother was sent for by Mrs. Churchill, who informed him coldly that it was her desire that Edith should be taken home by him as soon after the funeral as possible, as her presence there had always been to her very undesirable. Samuel Talbot could not imagine why Mrs. Churchill should take such a tone, as he had always understood that his uncle intended to make Edith his heiress; but his astonishment was changed to indignation when he found that there was no will, but one made many years before, in which Mrs. Churchill was left all the property. He applied to Edith for an explanation, and, as soon as she comprehended him, she said that her uncle had told her but a short time before his death that he had left her all his fortune, excepting that during her life Mrs. Churchill was to have the house, with an income sufficient to support her in the style to which she had been accustomed. However, this will was nowhere to be found, and all but Edith and some who were very well acquainted with his feelings for her, thought that if he had ever made it he must have destroyed it himself; for Mrs. Churchill had always been known as a strictly upright, conscientious woman, and so she always had been, except in some cases where her unamiable temper and strong prejudices had warped her from her naturally strong sense of right and wrong.

And so Edith returned to her old home after seventeen years of absence, sad and dejected, sorrowing so much for the death of her uncle that the loss of the inheritance was hardly considered as any grievance by her at first. Of course as months went by, and time, the grand consoler softened her distress, she felt, and felt at first acutely, the deprivation of many things which she had always considered as essential to her comfort. But her mother was as kind and devoted as ever; and her brothers and sisters, trained under so lovely and excellent an example, did all in their power to comfort her and make her losses seem light. Her father was the only one who complained, or aggravated in any way her distress, and this he did oftener by sneering allusions to her "fair-weather lover," as he called Devereux, than in any other way.

This annoyed her the more because, though she herself felt the utmost confidence in his affection, his silence and absence gave ample reason for comment and distrust. Edith had been at home for six weeks, and had not heard a word from him, or even seen him since her uncle's death, though always before when she had been making her yearly visit of four weeks at home, he had come up from New York once or twice to visit her. She could not help thinking it rather strange that he did not lay aside his business, however pressing it might be, and hasten to console her in her time of affliction. But he came at last; she caught a glimpse of him, as seated in a travelling carriage he drove quickly past her father's house to the inn. She wondered why he did not get out at the cottage as usual, and let the carriage go on; she wondered still more at his long delay in coming to her, and had begun to persuade herself that she must have been mistaken.

Restless and uneasy, she wandered from room to room, and at length took refuge in the little shrubbery in front of the cottage, where she spent the whole afternoon, either walking hastily through its winding pathway, or standing almost motionless with her eyes fixed on the gate. Her mother came out two or three times to call her in, but the last time she saw Edith hastening to meet Devereux, who had just entered, and so she drew back without speaking. It seemed to Mrs. Talbot a very little while, though, before the door of the little sitting-room opened quietly, and Edith entered with a face pale as marble, but as calm and unmoved, she seemed to be so determined to resist all expression of feeling that she had entirely overcome them.

"What is the matter, dear?" asked her mother; "where is Mr. Devereux? Didn't you ask him to stay to tea?"

"He has gone away, mother."

"Gone away!" exclaimed Mrs. Talbot; "not to New York?"

"Yes," said Edith, calmly, "he has returned to New York. He is not coming here again. Don't say anything about him to me just now, dear mother, and ask the others not to—I cannot bear it yet. I shall be better soon, I hope."

Edith's first struggle with her feelings when she found that it was her wealth and not herself that Devereux had sought, was more overpowering to her than all her previous sorrows. She felt so desolate and abandoned, and yet was so determined not to yield to her feelings, that though outwardly she appeared unusually composed, she felt herself to be in great danger of losing her reason. But the first bitterness of her grief over, she was astonished to find how easily she could uproot all those feelings of affection, which she had cherished so long that they had seemed once a part of her inmost being. To a high-spirited, lofty soul like Edith's, Devereux appeared so thoroughly contemptible and unworthy, that she at last began to regard her loss of fortune as a blessing rather than an affliction, in preventing her from becoming the wife and intimate companion of such a man.

Three years passed away, during which Edith felt that she had derived more real advantages from her sorrows, accompanied as they were by great blessings, than from all the worldly advantages she had previously enjoyed. She had changed from a spoiled and petted child, to a generous and self-denying woman, and had become a great favorite in her own family, where her energy and activity made her very useful. At the end of this time she married the clergyman of the parish, John Cavendish, a man every way worthy of her, and was not a little surprised to find that she was even happier in the little parsonage, with her limited income and manifold duties, than she had ever been as the rich Mr. Churchill's heiress. But it cannot be denied that she sometimes longed for a little of the wealth that she had formerly lavished so foolishly; especially after her little Reginald's birth, for whom she could not bear to anticipate the narrow sphere in which he would probably be condemned to move.

She was talking to her husband about it one evening when a letter came from Mrs. Churchill, requesting her to come to her as soon as possible. Edith suspected at once that the will so long desired in vain was found at last, and lost no time in obeying the summons. Mr. Cavendish could not accompany her, but was to follow her in a day or two; and she sent her child, now nearly two years old, to her mother, as she knew her aunt's temper too well to think that the presence of a noisy boy would be anything but a source of discomfort.

She was, therefore, alone when, after having saluted kindly the old domestic who came forward to welcome their former pet and little mistress, she entered the large, elegant drawing-room where her aunt generally sat. She met with a very different greeting from what she had expected; instead of the usual cold bow or stiff shake of the hand, Mrs. Churchill hastened toward her with a nervous, eager, impatient expression, kissed her hurriedly, complained of her delay, when in reality Edith had been half afraid that her aunt would think her very impatient, and telling her that her old room had been prepared for her, and that she must get herself ready for dinner as soon as possible, hurried her off without hardly allowing her to speak. Yet in this little time Edith had noticed a great change in her aunt's once dignified and commanding appearance. She looked pale and harrassed, and was restless and pre-occupied. She seemed to be alone too, and Edith had always heard that the house had been filled with her aunt's own relations ever since her departure.

Mrs. Churchill not only took no dinner herself, but was evidently so impatient to have the meal over, that Edith hardly allowed herself time to taste the dishes placed before her. When they were alone Mrs. Churchill began abruptly by asking Edith "what she thought her uncle had done with the will he told her he had made?"

"He told me," said Edith, "that he had put it in his secretary, and I always thought that it must have slipped into some crevice, or been carefully hid in some secret drawer that was known to no one but himself."

"Then you never suspected me, Edith?" asked her aunt.

"Oh, no! never for one moment! such a thought would never enter my head. I hope you have not supposed me guilty of such injustice?" said Edith.

"I don't know," said Mrs. Churchill, "it has seemed to me as though everybody must have suspected me, and I could bear it no longer. I did take it, Edith, here it is."

With these words, drawing the will from her pocket, she handed it to her astonished niece.

"I will tell you all about it, my child, and then I hope, though you must blame me, you will judge me more leniently than you do now. Your uncle gave it to me to read and I did not like it at all, and told him so, and we had quite a quarrel about it; however he consented to alter one clause in it which I objected to, and left it in my writing-desk till the lawyer who drew it up should come again, which he was expected to do in a few days. Your uncle knew I disliked you, or rather that I thought I did, yet my character for uprightness and truth was such that he never suspected me of being capable of committing so dishonorable an act as depriving you of your right.

"After his sudden death, when they were looking in vain for this very will, and applied at last to me, I yielded to a sudden and powerful impulse, and said that I knew nothing about it. I had no sooner spoken the words than I would have given all I gained by them and more too, to have recalled them—but I could not confess myself a thief, and neither could I bear the sight of you whom I had wronged. You know how harshly I sent you away, but you do not know how often I wished you to return. I found to my astonishment that I had really become attached to you, and that more than half my apparent dislike arose from my naturally perverse disposition and bad temper. My own relations, for whose sake I had committed so great a crime, disgusted me by their sycophancy and deceit, and I longed for you, frank and hasty as you were. Besides a sense of my guilt preyed upon me, and I do not think I have had a moment's peace since you left. I could not bear it any longer, and so I sent for you. You may do as you please with the will, dear Edith, only I entreat you, dont make my guilt public, at least while I live.

I will give up this residence to you now, and all but a bare support—I shall feel better if I do so, I think—I can bear poverty but not infamy."

But Edith would not hear of her aunt's doing that; she insisted on her retaining all the privileges given to her by the will, and always allowed it to be supposed, even by her husband, that her aunt had accidently discovered the long-lost document, which her sense of justice would not permit her to suppress. Consequently Mrs. Churchill's character stood higher than ever, and she lived and died more than ever respected and esteemed.

Edith often met Charles Devereux, after she had removed to a place not far from her aunt's residence, and never did so without making a mental comparison between him and her husband, and thanking Providence for the troubles that had shown her the worthlessness of the one, and the value of the other. As for him he married an heiress, his grand object in life, but whether he was happy or not no one could tell.

THE ARTIST'S DAUGHTER.

BY ANNIE RAVELIN.

"Shall I confess it? I believe in broken hearts, and the possibility of dying of disappointed love."—IRVING.

"That heart the martyr of its fondness burn'd,
And died of love that could not be return'd."—CAMPBELL.

THE saloon was brilliantly lighted, and

"The young and the gay they had met in the hall,
And manhood and beauty both vied at the ball."

Never was there a gayer throng, and never more of manly beauty and of feminine loveliness than assembled that evening.

Standing alone at the embrasure of an open casement was a lady of a superior and peculiar style of beauty. Her form, rather above the usual height, was exceedingly graceful, and every movement betrayed that original dignity and native nobleness, that at once excites respect and admiration. Her high arched forehead was clear and white as the marble that her father sculptured, and her finely moulded features were equal in beauty to his most masterly production, while her large, dark eyes were soft and beautiful as the famed skies of her native Italy.

As she was gazing on the moonlight shadows with a thoughtful air, she started at a light touch upon her hand, and the sound of a gay and pleasant voice: "Aye, Florence, I scarce had seen you half hidden in the drapery of this window, and had almost past you as I just entered the saloon." The youth, who addressed her, was a pupil of her father's, and had been for years a daily visitor at his studio.

There was nothing striking in his countenance, unless it was that peculiar paleness about the mouth, which is so often observed in the intellectual and studious. He had just returned from a distant city, where he had been absent for several months, and they now met for the first time since his departure. His deportment was frank and brother-like; his calm, clear blue eye looked out the quietness of friendship; but hers, was full of a deep, warm, wild poetry that seemed to have drawn its fervor from the fount of love; and he, all unconsciously, was the object of that devoted passion.

"She had no breath, nor being, but in his;
He was her voice; she did not speak to him,
But trembled on his words; he was her sight,
For her eye follow'd his, and saw with his,
Which color'd all her objects:—she had ceased
To live within herself; he was her life,
The ocean to the river of her thoughts,
Which terminated all: upon a tone,
A touch of his, her blood would ebb and flow,
And her cheek change tempestuously—
But he in those fond feelings had no share:
——————————to him she was
Even as a sister—but no more———"

Another, a young midshipman, joined them. "Well, Legare," said he, addressing the artist, "you are to be married shortly to the pretty Mary Hartly, I hear." The lady started: the well spring of her being was suddenly poisoned, the light of her existence was extinguished.

But the soul, wrought up to its highest pitch of excitement, often exhibits a quickness of thought, and a self-possession, which, in a less excited state of feeling, it is a stranger to. The desperation of despair, the agony of an over-wrought mind, brings a calmness, coolness, and deliberation, never seen, where hope is mingled with those feelings. Thus mingled, a fluctuation is produced, which, like the waves of the sea, prevents this fearful stagnation.

Florence heard the words, and her soul was death struck. But, though with a face of snowy paleness, she turned to him, and with a gay and sportive laugh, gave him a jest as bright and beautiful as the bubble of a glancing wave; and then she praised with ingenuousness the fair and innocent young being that he had chosen, and wished them happiness.

* * * * * * * *

Legare was sitting in the drawing-room alone with Florence; as he took a book from the table, an open paper fell from it; he took it up and read:

This earnest love must all be crush'd,
These wild affections must be hush'd;
No more my watchful eye must roam,
To see thee wending to my home.

When thou shalt choose another bride,
A wife stands fondly at thy side,
This burning love I feel for thee,
Will *then*, I know, be guilt in me.

'Tis now, 'tis now, 'ere comes that time,
While still this soul be free from crime,
That I must teach me to forget,
Whom, loving now, I sin not yet.

There was no quotation, and it was written in Florence's hand. What does this mean? Whom could Florence Cordova love that would not be proud of that love? Have not all sought her, and she refused them all? With deep seriousness she fixed her large eyes upon them One moment she determined to tell him it was he, he, whom she loved, and who was meant there in those agonized lines; but the thought of his bride came to her, and she could not for her life have been unjust to her. Suddenly, as though her seriousness had been a farce, she burst into a laugh; "hey, Charlie, and did you think I meant myself there? It is easier sometimes to use the first person than any other, and so I did it then." And that

gay laugh, and those light words took effect; and he believed those lines to be the feelings of some heroine of her strong imaginings.

* * * * * * * *

The marriage day came, and Florence accompanied her father to the brilliant scene. Her nerved spirit operated as the wine cup in bringing to her more than her usual keenness of intellect. And she was the star of the evening, sparkling in her beauty and wit, and never was her proud father so conscious of the unusual talent and loveliness of that darling child.

He knew not that that evening hers was the brilliancy of the hectic, and like it was the presage to consumption—a consumption of the soul.

And there was Mary Hartly, her face beaming with smiles of happiness, standing beside the devoted and affectionate Legare. Soon as the ceremony was pronounced, Florence sealed a kiss on the young bride's brow, and gave her a bouquet, tokening a thousand wishes for their happiness. Nor were her air and words of affection assumed: she was one who would have scorned to breathe one word of love that came not from the innermost sanctuary of her soul: she loved the girl; loved her because she was lovely; and yet more, because she was beloved by him, whose very shadow she had gazed on with affection.

* * * * * * * *

It was the close of an Indian Summer day; the sun was gathering in its last rays, and the quiet of evening was approaching.

Florence, in deathly beauty, was reclining on an ottoman in her father's studio, and gazing earnestly on the beautiful, yet melancholy scene. It was a semblance of herself: those few soft days, when summer seemed to step back a moment, as if sorry it had departed, to seal its hurried farewell kiss, were the sure presage of the chilly blasts of winter; and that bloom upon her cheek, that hectic spot, the mockery of health,

> Told, like an Indian Summer day,
> That life was hast'ning to decay.

It was a fitting season for youth and beauty to depart; and Florence felt that the "Angel of the Covenant" was near. Her father sat beside her, and gazed intently upon her. There was a long silence; and then came a sound, as though an almost spent zephyr was touching the chords of an æolian.

"My father," said Florence, "I feel that I am dying: mine has been a disease that no physician could cure, no medicine heal: it is my soul's strong workings that have worn out this tabernacle of clay: the fire of the young affections burning upon the altar of the heart, and the sacrifice refused, often consumes that heart. 'Tis that which withers the rose 'ere half bloomed, which hurries down the sun, though scarcely risen, which brings many to an early grave, with the 'dew of youth' fresh upon them; and it is thus that I die. Forgive me, my more than father, my dearest, best friend, if I have erred in concealing from you that which has absorbed my being: but I have loved with all the intensity of which a woman's nature is capable: yes, while you have regarded Legare with the tenderness of a father, and he looked upon me with the affection of a brother; I have felt for him all the fire of an ardent love. And it has all been concealed; and let it still be—let not the tears which Charles and his sweet Mary shall shed over my grave, be embittered by the thought that it was their loves that brought me thus early there. And, as I die, dear father, let that mantle of your love, which has ever been wrapped around me, fall upon those dear ones, whom, with you, I love best on earth. Their affection, your beautiful art, and your trust in Heaven, must be your consolation when I am gone. And it will be a consolation, too, when I tell you that I grieve not at death, that I rejoice in the prospect of it. It is a gladdening thought to me that my spirit is about to escape from its earthly temple, that I am to become altogether spiritual, and so soon to be akin to those angelic spirits that 'adore and burn;' for the crucible of agony, through which my soul has past, has, I trust, refined it, and, I humbly dare to hope, fitted it for the society of Heaven. Seal one other kiss upon my brow, dear father, and I go."

That father impressed there one deep and agonizing embrace; and when he raised his face from hers she was as white and soulless as the statues around him: he was alone with the creations of his art.

ADVERTISING FOR A WIFE.

BY HARRY SUNDERLAND.

"MARRIED! Are you really in earnest, Jones?"

"Oh, yes. I've got a wife; and a good one too. Though I must own that she's not what would be called a beauty. But pretty is that pretty does. I thought her exceedingly plain at first, but that impression has worn off, and to my eyes her person is now quite agreeable."

"But Jones, how were you ever able to muster up courage enough to ask a woman to have you?"

"That was the great point of difficulty," replied Jones. "I would have taken a wife ten or fifteen years earlier than I did, if it hadn't been for that confounded 'popping the question.' But I never could do that. More than a dozen times have I been on the point of offering my heart to some charming fair one, who already had it in full possession, notwithstanding she, strangely enough, would not discover the fact; but it was no use; I couldn't do it. My knees would begin to tremble, my breast to heave, my heart to rise upward, and my tongue to cleave to the roof of my mouth. More than once in my life, I got to the point of essaying to speak; but I had no utterance. The vocal organs were suffering under a temporary nervous paralysis.

"Once I was more desperately in love than usual; and I believe the sweet, young creature who was the object of this passion felt for me a reciprocating tenderness. I visited her for upward of a year, and if I could have said the word, I believe she would have fallen into my arms at almost any time during that period: but I had not the courage. She was a beautiful being—a very poet's dream of loveliness. But I lost her because my faint heart would not let me win her. It was leap year, when I visited this sweet maiden, and I lived in the daily hope that she would assert her privilege, and speak the words of love herself. I even alluded to the Bissextile fact, but my meaning was not understood. While I yet lingered, resolving every day that on the morrow I would know my fate, a bolder man, and less worthy I would fain believe, stepped in and carried off the prize.

"It took me a year or two to get over this. My heart had been deeply touched. But, I was a marrying man. A wife I had always intended to have, and a wife I was fully resolved that I would have. So, as a last resort, I advertised."

"What!"

"I advertised for a wife."

"Oh, dear!"

"Its true. And what is more I was successful. Let me tell you the story."

"Do. I have seen a good many matrimonial advertisements, but set them all down as pieces of pleasantry. And you really got your wife by advertising."

"I did, without doubt. I had become desperate on the subject, when the thought of advertising popped into my head. After turning it over for a while, I said to myself, 'that will do,' and, forthwith set to work upon the form of announcement. This I found almost as hard a task as the one I was seeking to escape. 'I'd rather write a book,' said I, throwing down my pen, after the tenth trial. But, I went at it again, and finally hammered out something that I thought would answer the purpose. To prevent being caught by a tartar, an ugly old maid, or a too loving widow, I included a proviso in the advertisement to the effect, that either party, at the interview, might decline a matrimonial contract, without assigning any reason therefor.

"In due time the advertisement appeared. I read it over in print a hundred times during the day it saw the light, and detected in it almost a hundred defects. But, it was too late for a change. My next concern was, the probability that tricks would be played upon me. There was no way to guard against them, and I saw that I must run my chance. Twice a day, for three days, I went to the office of the paper in which the announcement of my matrimonial intentions had appeared, but not until the afternoon of the third day did I receive any response. The note that bore in superscription, the initials I had selected, was neatly penned, and set forth, in well selected language, the writer's desire to enter into a marriage contract with a man of good principles and suitable age and condition. She mentioned a place of interview; described the dress she would wear, and gave a name by which I was to address her, in order that there should be no mistake.

"I was on the spot to a minute, you may be sure. The time was sun down, and the place a beautiful cemetery near the city. Leaning, in a pensive attitude, upon the iron railing that enclosed an exquisitely designed monument, I saw a well dressed, well formed, but deeply veiled lady. Passing close to her, I said, 'Anna.' Instantly she turned toward me, and we both stood almost motionless. Then, the stranger slowly drew aside the veil, while my heart throbbed heavily with its burden of expectation. The face was very plain, and showed the lines of at least thirty-five or forty years. In a word, she was old and ugly. There was a pause of embarrassment, as we stood for a few moments, looking intently at each other.

"'Enough,' I at length said, in a respectful tone, for there was an expression in the woman's face that inspired an instant respect; but I, at the same time, bowed low, and, turning away, left the place of meeting, feeling severely disappointed.

"This had also proved a failure. No other answer

came to my advertisement. A few months elapsed, when I resolved to try the experiment again. It was my only hope. So, after great labor, I prepared another advertisement, couching it in different terms, and sending it to another paper. On the morning after its appearance, I found a billet at the printer's. The fair respondent said that she had read my announcement, and, from my description of the person I was desirous of drawing into a tender alliance, did not in the least doubt that she would suit me. She said that she was well educated, moved in good society, was of a calm, affectionate temper, with a good deal more to the like purpose. I thought, from all this, that I had found the right person at last; and, you may be sure, was at the appointed place of meeting within a second of the time.

"The lady was there, and with her veil down. The proper sign given, she drew the thick covering from her face. I started, and uttered an exclamation of surprise; while a flush stained the lady's face. Again I bowed low, and without uttering a word, turned away; as I did so, my ear caught a sigh, and I was touched with a feeling of regret for having twice disappointed the same individual. But, her age and her features were against her."

"The same lady, Jones?"

"The very same."

"Possible!"

"Well, after this I concluded to go to another city and try my luck there. Having began to advertise, and feeling that it was my only chance, I could but persevere, hoping for a good result in the end. To New York I made a pilgrimage, and there, in the columns of the Sun newspaper set forth an account of my wants and wishes. Two or three answers came, but they bore, to my eyes, strong internal evidence of being traps laid to catch me, and I did not, therefore, reply to them, or give the interviews that were proposed. At last, after many days had elapsed, I found, at the office, a neat, gilt edged perfumed note, written in delicate characters, and with great propriety and modesty. The writer expressed a desire to meet me, and said that I would find her, dressed in a certain way, walking upon the Battery at five o'clock on the next afternoon. She said, that having lost by death, some years before, her last relative, and desiring, for many reasons, to have a home and a friend, she had thought well of answering my advertisement. But, she would frankly state, that she was not disposed to marry, just for the sake of getting married; and would, therefore, say, that, while she left me perfectly free to decline an alliance if the proposed interview were not satisfactory, she would feel herself just as free to act in a similar manner.

"All that, I thought very well. To the Battery I wended my way at the time appointed. The note of my fair correspondent had been consulted I don't know how many times; and each time the impression in her favor became more decided. As to my being pleased with her, no doubt remained. The fear was, that I might not find favor in her eyes.

"Five o'clock came, and one of the great iron doors of the Battery swung open to admit your humble servant. Repressing my impatience, I walked as leisurely as possible down one of the main avenues toward the particular spot where the lady was to be. A woman of medium stature, with form of faultless symmetry, dressed in exquisite taste, awaited me. I was quickly by her side, and, with palpitating heart, uttered, in a low voice, the name she had given me. She started as she turned toward me, but did not withdraw her veil. Then she moved on, and I walked by her side. It was some moments before I could get sufficient command over my voice to break the silence with which we were both oppressed.

"'The purpose of this meeting,' I at length said, 'need not to be mentioned. You see me, fair stranger, and are, doubtless, impressed, already, favorably or unfavorably. Let me see your face, that *I*, likewise, may be no longer in suspense. If we are suited to each other, let it be known as quickly as possible.'

"But the lady kept her hand tightly upon her veil.

"'I fear that we are not suited,' she replied, half sadly.

"'Why so?' I asked, quickly. 'Is my person disagreeable? Does my face present an index of character that is repulsive?'

"'No,' she replied, in a low, sweet, thrilling voice. 'I am disappointed, I own; but my heart feels no repulsion; my mind perceives nothing in you that offends.'

"'Then why express a doubt?' I asked.

"'I will not be agreeable to you,' she replied.

"'How do you know? What reason have you for assuming this?'

"The lady was silent.

"'Let me see your face,' I urged.

"'It will disappoint you,' she said. 'I am not what we call beautiful.'

"'But true and permanent beauty is of the mind,' I replied.

"'All say that, but few are willing to take for a wife one as plain as I am, no matter what may be her virtues.'

"'Years and sorrow mar the most lovely countenance—age plucks the roses from the fairest face. But a lovely mind progresses even toward the spring time of eternal beauty.'

"'All that I know,' she answered, 'and such sentiments men gravely utter as truths. But, after all, they are won by a pretty face. I am not beautiful, sir, nor am I very young.'

"'What care I for youth or beauty,' was my enthusiastic reply. 'Give me, in a wife, one whose mind is matured by experience, well balanced by just principles, and softened by unselfish affections. Such a woman, if I can find her, will I take to my home and heart as a priceless treasure. Fear not to let me see your countenance. Your words and tones have filled my mind with approval, and my heart with tender sympathy.'

"Slowly was the veil drawn aside. I looked eagerly, and a pale, anxious, and certainly not beautiful face, met my earnest gaze. A slight exclamation fell involuntarily from my lips; and I stepped a step backward. The veil fell, and a deep sigh was poured upon the air.

"The lady was turning away, as I laid my hand gently upon her arm, and said—

"'It is enough! The matter is decreed. We are made for each other. I will not disregard coincidences so remarkable. Draw your hand within my own, and let us prolong this strange interview.'

"The lady did as I desired, and I felt her hand tremble as it was laid upon my arm.

"'Now lift your veil, and let me see your face and grow familiar with it.'

"She drew aside the dark screen. It was the same face I had twice before met, but now it did not seem half so repulsive as at first; and, before we had circled the Battery twice, it had become, through the radiance of thought and affection, agreeable to my eyes. Enough to say, that we were married that night, and a true and good wife she has made me."

"That's rather a strange story, Jones," said his friend. "'The doctor' tells one very much like it."

"Doctor who?"

"'The doctor.'"

"Well, I don't care what doctor tells it, it happened just as I said."

"Perhaps he got hold of your story."

"Very likely," said Jones. "In fact, it must be so, for I am very certain a thing like that couldn't happen twice."

"Oh, no, certainly not," returned the friend with a shrug. "That would be stranger than the fact itself."

AUNT HANNAH.

BY CAROLINE ORNE.

"There is something I want you to tell me, aunt," said Eliza Herbert, a girl of fourteen, and she drew a stool close to her aunt's feet, and leaned her head in her lap, so that a whole cloud of nut-brown curls fell over her black silk apron.

"What is it?" said her aunt, passing her hand caressingly over the fair forehead upraised to hers.

"I am almost afraid to ask," said Eliza, "but I want you to tell me why you, who are so good and so handsome, and so accomplished, were never married."

A slight flush was, for a moment, perceptible on aunt Hannah's cheeks, which might have been occasioned by Eliza's compliment to her beauty and good qualities, or a consciousness of the ridicule which a certain class attach to the appellation of old maid. It might too have been caused by a blending of all these, or by certain memories which the question called up. She remained silent a few minutes, and then said—"I will tell you, Eliza—I never had an offer that exactly suited me."

"How strange," said Eliza, "when you are so easy to please, and are so keen-sighted to every body's virtues, and so blind to their faults. Now there is aunt Margaret, who is not half as pretty as you are, married to one of the best, the handsomest, and the most noble looking men in the world. Come, aunt, do tell me all about it, for I am tired of my piano, my worsted work, and my book."

"My life has been a very quiet, uneventful one," said aunt Hannah, "and would, I am afraid, make a dull story, but I will tell you about some dear friends of mine, if that will do."

"Oh, yes," said Eliza, "that will be the next best thing to hearing about yourself. There I hear mother coming, but that need make no difference."

"Eliza wants me to tell her a story, sister," said aunt Hannah, as Mrs. Herbert took her accustomed seat at the fireside, "and I have promised to tell her one about some old friends. It is an old story to you, so you can prompt me if I make any mistakes."

"Certainly," said Mrs. Herbert.

"One of my friends," said aunt Hannah, "whom I shall call Isabel, was the youngest of a large family of daughters. Her form was slight, her complexion and features delicate, and she might have been called interesting rather than handsome. Her sister, Kate, two years older, some people called better looking, though."

"Better looking?" said Mrs. Herbert, breaking in upon her, "she was the most beautiful girl in town, yet beauty was her least charm."

"I believe you exaggerate a little, sister," said aunt Hannah. "When Isabel was sixteen and Kate eighteen, one Leonard Frankland, a young merchant, came to reside in the place. He soon became intimate with their brother, who used often to invite him home to take tea, or spend the evening. He was—that is, most persons thought him singularly handsome, and that his manners were peculiarly attractive. It was not long before it began to be whispered in the family, and among their more intimate acquaintances, that he was partial to Kate. Kate was not so blind as not to perceive it herself, and but for one thing it would have made her the happiest girl that ever lived. She from the first had seen that Isabel, though unconscious of it herself, had given her heart to the fascinating Frankland, so she made up her mind to sacrifice her own happiness for the sake of this dear sister. It was very hard for poor Kate, but she had more confidence in her own strength, both moral and physical, than she had in Isabel's; she felt that she would be able to rise from the blow, and ultimately to have the power of being tranquil, and even happy. But Isabel, so frail and so delicate, she knew that it would kill her to see the chosen of her heart forever lost to her."

"But if Leonard Frankland liked Kate best," said Eliza, "then there must have been a double sacrifice."

"He liked her best at first," said aunt Hannah, "yet there was a gentleness, a loss of self-reliance in the character of Isabel that needed only to be discovered by such a person as Leonard Frankland, to excite an interest which might soon ripen into love. I believe, indeed, that it is not uncommon for men who are remarkable for spirit and energy, to be better pleased with those whose more prominent traits are softness and delicacy, rather than those similar to their own.

"Kate affected more independence and vivacity than would have been natural to her, even had her heart been at ease; and she soon found that it began to have the effect she desired. Such unrestrained exuberance of spirits offended the taste of Frankland, and he often turned from the brilliant and sparkling Kate, to contemplate the serene loveliness of Isabel. If he could only have seen the anguish that lay concealed beneath the mask of smiles which she constantly wore—if he had known how difficult it sometimes was for her to prevent the gay notes of some lively song, as she appeared carelessly to warble them, from breaking into moans of agony—but he neither saw nor knew—he never knew, so well did she act her part, that he was ever otherwise than perfectly indifferent to her."

"And did Isabel know?" said Eliza.

"Never—it would have poisoned all her happiness, for she was tenderly attached to her sister."

"I am glad that she did not," said Eliza, "it would have been so selfish and ungenerous in her if she had, to have received Leonard Frankland's attention."

"Kate did not miscalculate her own strength; and when one evening Isabel folded her arms around her, and told her that she was the affianced bride of Leonard Frankland, she felt calm and satisfied. How, indeed could she feel otherwise, when she knew that had she herself been Frankland's bride, she must have turned from the altar to stand beside a sister's grave. 'How,' thought she, 'could I ever have looked on my wedding-robe, without imagining it to be stained with the drops wrung from a broken heart.'"

"And were Frankland and Isabel happy," said Eliza, "after they were married?"

"Yes, as happy as it is possible to be in a life where we can drink of no cup that is not dashed with gall; and wear no flower that does not conceal the worm or the thorn."

"Are they still living, aunt?"

"Yes, and surrounded by a group of lovely and happy children."

"I hope that dear Kate was married to some body that she liked a great deal better than she ever did Leonard Frankland."

"That would have been impossible, so she never married."

"What? did such a lively, handsome girl as Kate, without a bit of starch about her, live an old maid?"

"She did."

"And what could she find to do to make her time pass pleasantly?"

"What does your aunt Hannah find to do?" said her mother.

"Oh, aunt Hannah is different from other single ladies. If she had been married I don't know what *I* should have done, for if I have a new dress to make she always assists me; if my music or drawing perplexes me, she knows how to put me right; and if I am sick, she nurses me. And then you know that when you and father want to go on a journey, she always keeps house for you, so that you never feel uneasy about the children while you are absent. It was the luckiest thing in the world for us and aunt Margaret Waldron too, that aunt Hannah remained single."

"Then you are glad that your aunt never married," said Mrs. Herbert.

"I am sure I have reason to be," replied Eliza, "and so have you—haven't you, aunt?"

"Yes, reason to be glad and thankful too."

"I knew so, for there is no other station in the world that you would be so happy in yourself, or make others so happy."

"It is not the station that has made your aunt so happy," said Mrs. Herbert, "but because she early found out the true secret of happiness."

"And what is the secret, mother?"

"In whatsoever situation you are in, to be there with content."

"I would give almost anything to see Kate and her sister, and Leonard Frankland. I don't believe he was so handsome a man as uncle Waldron is—was he, aunt?"

"Yes, he was handsomer than your uncle Waldron is now, for Leonard Frankland was then in his youthful prime."

"I wish you would tell me who Kate really was," said Eliza.

Her mother smiled and looked significantly toward aunt Hannah.

Eliza sprang up from the stool at her aunt's feet, and threw her arms round her neck.

"Why how stupid I was not to guess it was you all the time," said she. "I might have known that there was not another person in the world besides dear aunt Hannah who would have acted so nobly and generously as Kate. And now I know too that Leonard Frankland and Isabel were uncle and aunt Waldron."

AGREEABLE NEIGHBORS.

BY HARRY SUNDERLAND.

"You don't know what a beautiful new parlor carpet the Henleys have just bought," said my wife to me, as I came in to dinner; "and it was only a dollar and a quarter a yard. It's worth almost as much again as ours was when new, and we paid a dollar thirty-seven and a half."

"Carpets are cheaper now than they were when we bought," I returned, a little coldly.

"True. That was a long time ago. I have just been looking at ours. They are really very much defaced Don't you think we can afford to buy new ones? I feel quite ashamed of them; they are so worn and faded."

"You did not think so indifferently of them until you saw Mrs. Henley's new one."

"Oh, yes I did. But, I thought, maybe, you might think we couldn't afford others, and so I didn't say anything about it. But now that the Henleys, who are really no better off than we are, have put down a beautiful new carpet on their parlor, I feel as if we ought to do the same. Ours look awfully shabby."

"To carpet our parlors will cost at least fifty dollars, Jane."

"Oh, no it won't, nothing like it."

"It is easy to make the calculation. Figures never lie. It will take twenty yards for each parlor."

"Not more than eighteen," replied my wife.

"It takes five breadths, and each room is four yards long."

As I said this, I took a rule from my pocket, and, in a few moments, proved the assertion I had made as to the length of the room.

"Four fives make twenty," I said, as I arose from my bent position, "and twice twenty make forty. Forty yards of carpeting at a dollar and a quarter a yard, will cost just fifty dollars."

"Ain't you mistaken?" returned my wife, who is not overly smart at figures. "Forty yards at a dollar a yard is only forty dollars. The forty quarters wont make ten, certainly."

"Divide four into forty, and you have ten. Or, multiply ten by four, and you have forty. Forty yards of carpeting at a quarter of a dollar a yard, will, therefore, make ten dollars; and ten dollars added to forty dollars will make just fifty."

"True enough! But I wouldn't have thought it. Fifty dollars is a good big sum; but then, you know, we don't want parlor carpets every year. It is six or seven years since these were bought. We shall have to get new ones very soon at any rate, and we might as well buy them now as at any other time; and better too, for I don't believe they will be as cheap in six months from this."

My wife was fairly set out for new parlor carpets, and meant to carry her point. This I understood very well, and not caring to fight a battle in which the odds were all against me, abandoned the contest, and gave my wife fifty dollars to buy the carpets, inwardly anathematizing Mrs. Henley, and wishing her a thousand miles away.

I had a very comfortable income of a thousand dollars a year, out of which I laid it down as a rule that I ought to save at least two hundred dollars. This I had been able to do for a couple of years, until, unfortunately, the Henleys moved next door, and my wife made the acquaintance of the very agreeable Mrs. Henley, whose husband received a salary of twelve hundred dollars per annum, all of which was regularly spent by the year's end. I had nearly four hundred dollars snugly laid away in the Saving's Bank when the Henleys became our neighbors. The amount had already dwindled away until only two hundred remained, when the parlor carpets were to be replaced by new ones. These new neighbors and acquaintances were very agreeable people, certainly. I liked Henley very well, and my wife was perfectly fascinated with Mrs. Henley, who was a woman of some taste, but rather extravagant notions for one in her circumstances.

Our style of living had been plain from the beginning, and with this style we were both very well satisfied. At the time of our marriage I had about a thousand dollars laid by, and this sum we expended in furniture, keeping in view comfort and convenience, rather than show. For two or three years, we found it necessary to expend all that could be saved out of my salary, which, during that time, was only eight hundred dollars, in completing the comforts of our little household. After that my salary was increased, and I was able to save something. With the pleasant prospect, if health continued, of being able to save enough to purchase, in time, a comfortable dwelling, I was going on in a very self-satisfied state of mind, when the Henleys moved next door. Three weeks were allowed to go by, and then my wife suggested that it was no more than right for her to call upon our new neighbors, who were, she had ascertained, very respectable people. I had no objections to offer, and, therefore, made none; and she, accordingly, one day made the proposed complimentary visit.

"I called to see Mrs. Henley this morning," she said to me when I came home to dinner.

"Well—how did you like her?" I returned, half indifferently.

"Very much indeed," replied my wife, expressing herself warmly. "She is one of the most agreeable women I ever met—a perfect lady in her manners. She says that I am the first one who has yet called

upon her. She appeared pleased; and said that she should put me down at once in the number of her friends. They have everything very nice about them. Mahogany chairs in the parlor, which is one long room, and a beautiful marble-top centre-table. On the mantle they have a vase of flowers in the centre, and candelabras at each end."

As my wife said this, she glanced toward the mantles in our plainly furnished parlors. On one of them was a pair of cut glass lamps, and on the other nothing.

"I really think we might afford a pair of cande'abras," she digressed to say. "They furnish a room so well, and only cost twelve or fifteen dollars."

I said nothing in reply; but thought our glass lamps looked very well, and that, for the mere appearance of the thing, twelve or fifteen dollars was too much for persons in our circumstances to spend for candelabras.

For some time my wife continued to run on about her agreeable neighbor. She had noticed everything in the parlor arrangement of her house, and the minutest particular of her dress, all of which she described.

Two days only elapsed before Mrs. Henley returned the call, and asked my wife if she wouldn't go shopping with her on the next day. This she promised to do, and as she had several articles to purchase herself, asked me for ten dollars with which to buy them.

"I declare!" she said to me, when I met her at dinner time, after the shopping expedition with Mrs. Henley, "I've been out the whole morning and spent all my money, without buying an article I intended to get. I was going to buy you half a dozen pocket handkerchiefs, a piece of muslin to make up, and some canton flannel for you, not one of which articles have I got."

"What have you bought?" I asked.

"I will show you," she replied, and brought out a bundle from one of her drawers. As she unrolled it. she said—"we met with some of the cheapest collars I ever saw in my life. Real French lace, and only two dollars a piece. There, just look at that?"

And my wife displayed before my eyes a worked collar that was no doubt all she alleged in regard to it, but as I was no judge. I could not be qualified to the fact

"Isn't it sweet?" she said

Of course I could do no less than assent.

"And it was only two dollars and a half. Mrs. Henley bought one without a word, and I couldn't resist the temptation to do the same. I hadn't a single handsome collar to my name, and felt really ashamed when I went out with Mrs. Henley, who had on one that didn't cost less than five dollars, and mine was a mean, common looking thing, that I had before we were married."

I hadn't a word to say.

"Wasn't I right to get it?" my wife asked, looking me intently in the face.

"Certainly, my dear. You needed a fine collar, and you did right to buy one."

"Now look at this."

A rich, showy dress pattern, met my eyes.

"Isn't that lovely?" said my wife.

"It is," I returned.

"Now, how much do you think it was a yard?"

"Indeed I don't know."

"Only forty cents," said my wife, with an air of triumph. "Last season nothing like it could be had for less than fifty cents. Mrs. Henley said she had not seen anything so cheap or handsome this season, and she has been about a good deal. She took a pattern at once, and as I am in want of a good dress, I did the same. It will make up beautifully. Don't you think so?"

"Yes, I think it will." What else could I say? My wife needed a dress, and this she considered both pretty and cheap. If it pleased her, I was satisfied.

Half a dozen little matters, of which I did not clearly understand the use, completed the list of purchases—things my wife would not have dreamed of wanting had she not been out shopping with her agreeable neighbor. On the next day I furnished ten dollars more to get the muslin, canton flannel and pocket handkerchiefs, which my wife said must be had immediately. As she had been so kind as to go shopping with Mrs. Henley, that lady very kindly consented to go out with my wife. The piece of muslin was bought, but the handkerchiefs and canton flannel were omitted. The ladies saw a couple of silk bonnets, the price of which was only six dollars each, which so struck their fancies that they forthwith concluded to buy them.

"It is just the thing!" said my wife to me, drawing the really handsome and becoming bonnet upon her head, and looking twenty per cent younger and prettier. "Now don't you think so?"

"I do indeed," I could not help saying, and with a warmth of manner that greatly pleased my good wife.

"I should have had to get a winter bonnet in a few weeks, and pay at least six dollars for one neither so good nor handsome as this. They were selling off, and I could not let the opportunity for securing a bargain like this, pass."

I had nothing to advance by way of objection. Ten dollars more were supplied for shopping purposes, and the canton flannel and pocket handkerchiefs secured this time

Thus began my wife's acquaintance with her agreeable neighbor, Mrs. Henley. From that period money went more rapidly. It cost, for shopping purposes alone, just double what it had done before. My wife's appearance and that of our two little ones was very much improved, and this was agreeable enough, but I could not help feeling that it was all costing too much. I found that, instead of having fifty dollars at the end of the quarter, to lay up, I hadn't a dollar. All was not spent in shopping, of course; but what was true in the clothing department, was true in every other department, also.

Before the Henleys had been our neighbor's three months, the glass lamps had disappeared from the mantle of our front parlor, and a set of candelabras were to be seen in their place.

Mr. Henley, upon whom my wife insisted I should call, I found an intelligent, agreeable man, and frequently spent a pleasant evening with him. As for the ladies, they were soon as thick as pick-pockets,

and saw each other every day. From the first week of their acquaintance, the ideas of my wife began gradually to enlarge, and her taste to become refined. The thought of economy gradually faded from her mind. Mrs. Henley became her model, and Mrs. Henley's ideas of things her ideas. She used, every fall, to put up a few jars of preserves—and these were generally confined to peaches and plums, the cost of which did not exceed five dollars. But this, the first season of her acquaintance with Mrs. Henley, she was visited with a regular preserving mania. Quinces, peaches, pears, plums, pine apples, watermelon rinds, and the dear knows what all! were boiled down in the best double refined loaf sugar, and sealed up in glass jars, the number of which I will not pretend to give. Brandied peaches, too, had to be put up in the best white brandy, for which I paid somewhere between three and four dollars a gallon. Altogether, I am sure the brandy, fruit, sugar, and jars did not cost a fraction less than thirty dollars. I said so to my wife, but she scouted the idea as preposterous.

And so the thing went on for more than a year, before the new carpets were bought, my deposits in the Saving's Bank steadily decreasing, until I had not over two hundred dollars left. I really began to feel serious, and to wish that Mrs. Henley had been married to the man in the moon.

The new carpets looked very fine. I had to acknowledge that. But the chairs and the card-table appeared rather ashamed of themselves in such genteel company.

"Mrs. Henley says our chairs will never do."

I had been looking for this.

"Confound Mrs. Henley!"

Dont suppose, reader, that I uttered this aloud. I was not quite so rude. I only thought it.

"We were looking at some excellent mahogany chairs, when we were in Walnut street this morning, at four dollars apiece. That would only be forty-eight dollars a dozen, and we paid twenty-five for these cane seats. It's a pity we hadn't bought mahogany chairs when we were about it. But these will do very well for the chamber."

When my wife gets a thing into her head, there is no getting it out. After she had said this, I saw the new chairs already in our parlors. This was in imagination; but the real vision came soon. A draft upon my deposits in the Savings' Bank for fifty dollars, furnished my wife with the means of gratifying her desire to have a set of cushioned chairs. Mrs. Henley pronounced them beautiful, but suggested that there was still something wanting to complete the effect. There must either be a sofa-table, or a centre-table, with a marble top.

"Mrs. Henley is very kind in her suggestions," I could not help saying, a little sarcastically. My wife did not like this at all, and met it with a warm defence of her agreeable neighbor. I was silenced. No more was said about a centre or sofa-table for a week or two. Then my wife, with the aid of her friend, discovered the very thing that was wanted, in a handsome sofa-table, with black Italian marble slab, the price of which, exceedingly moderate, was only twenty-two dollars. As there was a pair of them, and the Henleys bought one, although they had a handsome centre-table already, I couldn't object very strongly, and I did not.

Carpets, chairs and sofa-table, were costly articles, and their purchase made quite a distinct impression upon the little fund I had saved. But, besides these marked impressions, there was a gradual wasting away of my cherished deposit. Mrs. Henley was a woman who always wanted something, and never was satisfied unless she were spending money. In the course of a year and a half, she had so filled my wife with her spirit, that our current expenses, instead of coming within eight hundred dollars, exceeded a thousand per annum, and my four hundred dollars were all drawn out of the Saving's Bank. I had cause to feel sober.

"This will never do," I would say to my wife. "We are living beyond our income."

"I am sure I try to be economical," she would answer. "I don't see how I could spend less. We live no better than other persons in our circumstances live. I am sure Mrs. Henley spends two dollars on herself where I spend one."

"We used to get along very comfortably on eight hundred dollars a year. But we have not only spent a thousand dollars a year for the last two years, but have drawn everything out of the Savings' Bank we had laid up."

"Yes, dear, but look how much furniture we have bought. These carpets, those chairs and tables, and that elegant rocking-chair; besides the dressing-bureau, wash-stand, and mahogany bedstead."

"True. But are we any happier than we were?" I replied. "To speak for myself, I can say that I am not."

"We shall not have them to buy again. They will last us our life-time," suggested my wife, by way of consolation.

"Yes, but my dear, we are living at an expense of at least eleven hundred dollars, and my salary, you are aware, is but a thousand."

My wife looked very serious.

"I don't know what we shall do," she said, in a desponding tone.

"If you don't, I must find out," was my mental reply.

When I left home I took the way direct to the store of my landlord.

"Mr. L———," said I, "have you another house a mile or two away from the one I now occupy?"

"Vacant, you mean?"

"Of course."

"Yes. I received the key this morning of a very excellent house up in Spring Garden District. But the rent is two hundred and fifty."

"Fifty dollars more than I now pay. No matter. That will do. Now, Mr. L———, I want you to write me a formal notification to leave your house within three days."

"Why so? That is a strange proceeding."

I gave him a history of the effect produced upon my finances by our very agreeable neighbors, and declared that if he did not do as I wished, I would be ruined.

My landlord laughed at me, but promised to do as I desired. You may judge of my wife's surprise when a peremptory notice to quit was received

"He can't get you out until the end of the quarter," suggested Mr. Henley.

"I wouldn't go for him!" said Mrs. Henley, with strongly marked emphasis.

But I affected to be greatly indignant at the landlord's note, and said I wouldn't live in his house another week if he gave it to me rent free for a year. On the next day I took my wife out to see the new house in Spring Garden. She strongly objected to going so far away.

"So far away from where?" I asked.

This she was not able to answer very satisfactorily. When, however, she saw the house, and found it to be so much larger, handsomer, and more convenient than the one we had left, she waived all objections, and we were snugly settled in it before a week had elapsed. The only thing that my wife regretted in the change, was the loss of her agreeable neighbor, Mrs. Henley. I need not express my feelings on that subject.

Soon we had matters and things going on in the old way, and I am now laying up from one to two hundred dollars a year, and shall continue to do so I hope, unless the Henleys take a fancy to move into our neighborhood, which Heaven forbid!

So much for our very agreeable neighbors. They were pleasant people certainly, but their acquaintance cost too much.



THE MAN OF PROSE AND MAN OF VERSE;

OR, THE MISFORTUNES OF BENJAMIN BANGS.

BY JACOB JONES.

If there is great difficulty in this world to raise money, there is none in procuring advice. It is not only bestowed in liberal quantities, at all times, and under all circumstances, but it is frequently forced upon you, notwithstanding any diffidence you may evince in receiving it. When I was a mere child—scarce emancipated from bibs and buckles—I remember hearing "a friend of the family" ask my father what he intended doing with "*that* boy"—at the same time pointing his long, bony fingers to me. Firmly believing that I had committed some forgotten sin, and was about to reap its fruits at the hands of my affectionate parent, I could do no less than put my finger in my mouth, and, in order to anticipate coming events, indulge in a loud, long, spasmodic bawl. But I was mistaken; and before I was led out of the room I heard the "friend" say, in answer to an objection from my mother—"don't think of it for a moment, sir. Setting young men up in business is just like setting up ten pins—they are sure to be knocked down, sir. Take *my* advice, sir. Give him a first rate education, and then let him shift for himself. Stuff him with Greek—soak him with Latin—edge in philosophy, chemistry, mathematics, the use of the globes, and all these sort of things, wherever you can find or make room. That's all Benjamin wants to get along with in this world. For you know, Mr. Bangs, that a good education is a fortune in itself."

Our destiny is often shaped by the merest trifle. This little conversation settled my fate. I received the best education that the best schools and the best teachers could give. But what does it all amount to? I can think Greek—speak Latin—talk French—walk Spanish—and gesticulate in German. I can write an epic poem, a five act tragedy, or a course of scientific lectures, in a single evening; and can furnish a leading article for the newspapers, on any imaginable or unimaginable subject, at a long notice, short notice, or no notice at all. But, as I said before, what does it all amount to? Here am I, Benjamin Bangs, after twenty years' buffetings with this heartless world, out at elbows and out of doors—a seedy, shrunken, ball-headed, long legged, spectacled specimen of genius in rags—a walking lexicon encased in a coat that once, alas! was black. The only thing I ever succeeded in was in contracting debts. A fact—'pon my *credit!* It is true that I have embarked in speculations that promised great personal advantage—have published my own effusions on my own account—have become the inmate of divers boarding houses—and have *figured* on the books of tailors and hatters, reckless of the consequences of pay day. These speculations, however, were not always unfortunate—for I sometimes *cleared myself!*

Folks talk of learning being better than riches. This may be so. But give me a modern built, modern furnished house—choice food in the larder, the best of servants in the garret, and blooded horses in the stable. Give me, while in the giving mood, a respectable amount of dividend paying stocks—a fair share of bonds and mortgages—a reasonable allowance of ground rents—and a comfortable credit at some specie liquidating bank—and I would willingly be as ignorant as a Hottentot—half man, half animal, and wholly vegetable. Eating, drinking, sleeping—growing to aldermanic rotundity—and with aspirations bounded by soups, salads, and suppers.

If my father had endeavored to make an impres-

sion, either on my mind or body, every time he caught me with book or paper in hand; if, instead of sending me to college, he had mounted me on a high stool in some counting-house, or had apprenticed me to a tailor, tinker or trader, I might now have been a loving husband, a doating father, and—and—(dream often indulged in!)—a *tax payer!* Instead of no means and extensive prospects, consuming the midnight oil (when I can get it!) with a full head and empty stomach, I might have had a house and a home; a rosy, comely wife, and at least six blooming sons and daughters!

There's Higgins, of the firm of Higgins, Hoopes & Co., the wealthiest dry goods merchants in the city. Tom and I were schoolmates together—sat on the same bench—eat off the same apple—and received our daily flaggelations from the same birch. He was the biggest booby in the whole school, and believes to this day that the President of the United States is elected by the councils of Philadelphia. Just see how he has got along. Whilst I have been making verses, he has been making money; whilst I have been cudgeling my brain for ideas he has been adding house to house, and lot to lot, and bank stock to bank stock. He is now a President of an Insurance Company—a Director in a Bank—and his word is said to be as good as his bond, and his bond will always command a premium even when the money market is quoted as "tight" and "tottering." And yet he is the same Tom Higgins that I wrote school compositions for thirty years ago; the same Tom Higgins who persisted in spelling bread without the *a;* the same Tom Higgins that was "kept in" day after day to snifle over lessons that he would not for he could not learn.

In our younger days, before I had run to seed, and Tom had sprouted into a capitalist, we frequently met in society. Papas and mammas seem to know intuitively what sort of stuff it requires for a successful man of business; but as my leaven was not of a *rising* kind, I never received much encouragement. Tom, on the other hand, was a vast favorite with them, although no apparent propitiatory efforts were taken on his part. His steady, plodding looks and ways, and cold, business twinkle of his eyes, spoke volumes —of bank notes—in his favor, which enabled him not only to knock at the doors of their hearts, but to walk in and hang up his hat there.

Ah! why do I talk of my younger days? It was then I knew Laura Wyndham. Knew her? Tame word! Doated upon her—loved her—the one all engrossing object of my idolatrous devotion! We are all lunatics, and therefore all blind, when we think, let alone speak, of our "first love," with all its soul-moving, heart-melting reminiscences. But Laura *was* the incarnation—the very embodiment—of all that was lovely and loveable. Tall—yet not too tall—hair, black as the raven's wing—eyes, large, dark, lustrous ones, darting lightning or love—form, that looked as if it had leaped from the mould of the brightest goddess that ever set Greeks and Trojans at loggerheads.

How often have I stood by the pump, in front of her father's house, the dreariest winter evenings, gazing at the room she occupied, covered with the falling flakes of snow, and unconscious of the cold and cutting wind that howled and swept through the streets. I knew *her* room; and I would gaze and gaze until my eyes fairly started from their sockets to accomplish what no one has yet succeeded in—that of seeing through wooden shutters. Romeo desired to be transformed into a glove. Although it may be there is "nothing like leather," I would have gladly compromised for a window shutter.

I loved, and thought I was beloved. It is true she had never made a confession; but there are, at a moderate calculation, a thousand different ways of ascertaining the temperature of a woman's heart without falling on your knees and popping the question plainly, plumply and unmistakeably. My esteem she sought to win; my society afforded her a pleasure she could not conceal; and my opinions moulded her tastes and often influenced her pursuits.

Things remained thus for a twelvemonth. I lived only in her presence. Fool that I was! Instead of worshipping at the shrine, and a welcome worshipper at that, I must go and consult the charming divinity—make a tender of my heart and hand!

The avowal was heard unmoved. She trembled a little at first; but it was not the tremble of anger surprise, or love. She held her head down for a moment, and the darkest and glossiest of curls—(she always wore front curls)—shaded her lovely countenance. Looking up again, with a cold, calm smile, she observed—

"To say, Mr. Bangs, that I am insensible to your merits, would be to practice a deception that I believe myself superior to. But have you thought well of this matter?"

"I have thought of nothing else, Laura."

"I will be frank with you, Mr. Bangs. I have been accustomed to what is termed the luxuries of refined life, and am, therefore, not insensible of the merits of well furnished apartments—a good table—an easy carriage—to say nothing of a *carte blanche* upon such trades people as fancy or caprice may direct me to. What some call luxuries, have now become to me the necessaries of life."

"Well, Laura."

"Well, Mr. Bangs, if I should marry any one, I would make a sufficient sacrifice in leaving such a home as I have, without being compelled to feel the loss of what would affect my personal happiness and social position. Don't think me impertinent, Mr. Bangs, but if I should consent to become your wife, what means have you to support me in the same style in which you now find me living?—for I know you have too much spirit to think of living upon the begrudged charity of a father-in-law."

Here was a perfect extinguisher of all my dearly cherished hopes. If Laura had consented to become mine on the condition that I would loan her twenty dollars, she would have still been beyond my reach.

I stammered forth something about congenial souls —gold—dross—and a cottage. Laura shook her head.

"I thought over all this before I saw you this evening, Mr. Bangs; and am glad that your explanations

have left no room for regret. The fruits of poverty and poetry are certainly none of the sweetest."

"But hear me, Laura, before you decide. It is true that I am poor now; but who knows what is in store for me? I am now writing for a political newspaper. My articles are read—my services prized—and as soon as the election is over, I am certain of getting an office."

"A printing office, probably, Mr. Bangs. No, no. My mind is made up. Mr. Higgins called this morning——"

"And he proposed to you?"

"He did."

"You accepted him?"

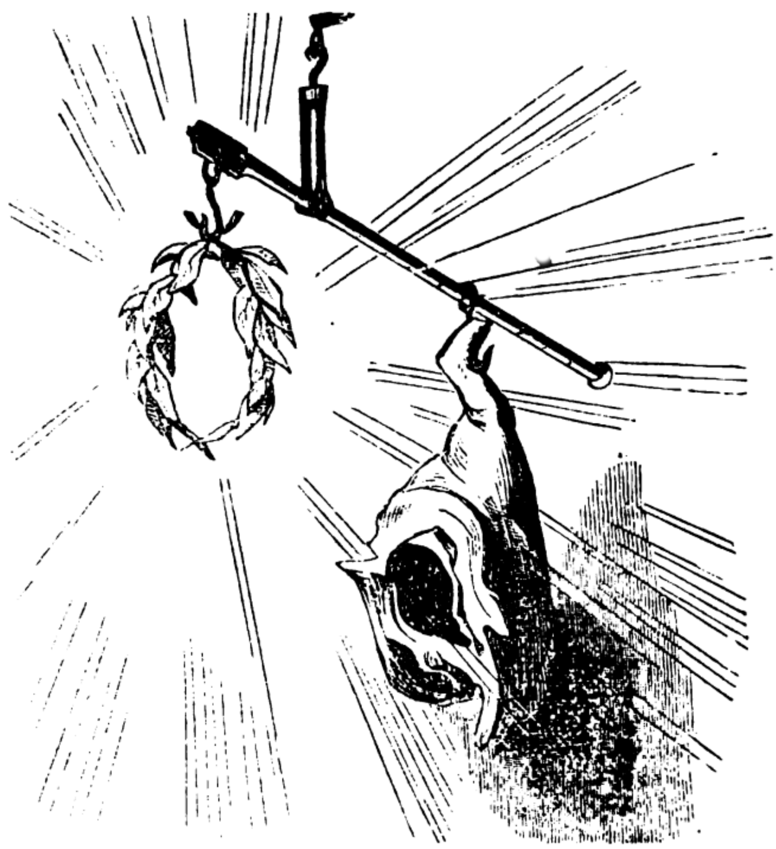
"I did."

"*Tom Higgins!* To be cut out by the greatest boob—oh! ah! Well, I never——"

"Can be my husband, you mean to say. That's very true, Mr. Bangs; but I hope that will not prevent you from being one of Mr. and Mrs. Higgins' most welcome guests."

They were married the following week; but as Tom never joined in the invitation, extended to me by his wife, I have yet to make the first call.

The last time I saw Laura, she was sitting in a stall of some fancy fair. Her avoirdupois could not have been less than one hundred and eighty—but this only filled my heart the more with unavailing regrets; the more painful because unavailing.



THE BELLE OF THE FANCY BALL.

BY ELLEN ASHTON.

It was the height of the season at one of our most fashionable watering places, when a party of fair girls met to arrange the costumes they were to wear at the great fancy ball.

"I shall go as Cleopatra," said Laura Villiers, a superb creature, with queenly carriage, voluptuous form and flashing eyes, exactly the person to act the haughty Egyptian, "I shall go as Cleopatra, remember I select the part first, and now, girls, let me hear what you have determined on."

Each proceeded to tell the costume she had selected, until finally all but one had spoken. This was Clara Townsend, a fair-haired, mild-looking young woman, the orphan niece and dependant on Laura's father. Clara was now at the Springs as the humble companion of her imperious cousin. When all had spoken, one of the company turned to Clara and asked what she was to wear.

"I am not going," said Clara, who had not received a ticket, and was, moreover, without the means to obtain a dress.

"Not going! Has not your uncle, or some one of the beaux invited you?"

Clara was about to reply mildly in the negative when her cousin looked up.

"I am sure, child," said Laura, "father would have procured you a ticket if he had thought you would like to go: don't suppose it was because you were not wished to be present: there," she added, imperiously, as Clara colored, "say no more about it: I will see that you have a ticket and dress: stay, what would suit the child: ah! here is the very character," she said, turning over the leaves of Byron, "Zuleika is just the thing for Clara: amiable and affectionate, you know, ready to endure all things, and romantically love till death."

There was a slight sneer on Laura's lips as she spoke, for, to tell the truth, she had more than once heard the amiability of Clara extolled by those whose good opinion she wished to monopolize, and as Clara was only a poor dependant, while she was an heiress, the haughty and petted Laura did not, even in public, give herself the trouble to regard Clara's feelings. In fact the orphan girl had many things to endure from her cousin. Oh! bitter is the bread eaten in charity. Often Clara stole away to her chamber in tears; often she prayed to be at rest beside her mother; and often she resolved to leave her uncle's house and earn her livelihood in the meanest capacity. But her uncle would never listen to her leaving him. She could not tell him, that it was her cousin's superciliousness which made her desire to go, and he was not in the way to notice it, so she was compelled to remain.

"I hear George Custis is to be here for the ball," said one of the young ladies. "Is it true, Laura?"

"I believe it is," was the reply. "Father received a letter from him a few days ago, announcing his return to New York, and promising to join us shortly. Father wrote back inviting him to come up to the ball, so I suppose he will be here."

"He is announced rich, is he not?"

"Yes! He was a ward of father's: hence I know all about it; his estate is princely."

"Ah! there will be no chance for any of us," said one of the girls, with a sigh. "I suppose you will monopolize him yourself, Laura."

The proud beauty gave a toss of her head, which spoke volumes; but made no reply in words. Just then her eye happened to fall on Clara, who was listening intently to what was said.

"Oh! but I forgot," said Laura, "none of us can have any chance, for Clara here has appropriated him to herself: when she was a child, just before he sailed five years ago, he took her on his knee, and called her his little wife: since then the romantic creature has, I verily believe, nourished the belief that Mr. Custis will come back and wed her."

The cruel taunt was the more cutting because Mr. Custis had actually done as Laura said, and because Clara had in her secret heart once or twice dreamed of the possibility alluded to; but she had instantly dismissed such day dreams; and, therefore, she felt how unjust was Laura's imputation. Yet she knew that the charge, coming from such a source, would find many believers. Every eye was turned on her immediately. The color rose to her cheeks at this, and when her cousin said, "see, her blushes reveal it," she burst into tears and left the room. Poor Clara!

as she heard Laura's heartless laugh on her closing the door, she wished herself dead, or anywhere if she could find peace.

The night of the ball soon came around. On the afternoon of that day, true to expectation, Mr. Custis arrived; but at so late an hour that he did not see Laura before the *fete* opened. The haughty beauty never looked more superb. The truth is she had exhausted all her own and the milliner's art, besides lavishing money profusely, in order to eclipse every one else; for she had set her heart on the fortune of Mr. Custis, and she well knew the effect of a first appearance. Though she had charged Clara with having designs on him, nothing was further from her real supposition; she had only said what she did in order to annoy her cousin: but she knew that there were others as rich, if not as beautiful as herself, who would leave no scheme untried to secure her father's old ward. She determined to be before hand with them all, nor did she doubt of success.

Both Laura and her cousin were in the ball-room before Mr. Custis. He had been seen by no one but Mr. Villiers, who pronounced his old ward quite improved, and jocularly told the girls to endeavor to secure him.

"Of course," he said, "it would not do for me to show any favoritism; each must take her chance:—and really you both look so beautiful, I think Custis will find it difficult to choose. You, Laura, are perfectly magnificent, and must take his heart by storm at the first glance; but if you fail in that," and he smiled on Clara, "my sweet niece here will prove a rival not to be despised, for she seems lovelier the more one looks at her. But ah! here he comes."

Both ladies looked up, and saw a tall, commanding figure, attired in the costume of a Turkish prince, coming directly toward them, and smiling as if he had already recognized them. His countenance, at all times handsome, looked wonderfully so when lit up by that smile; and each of the females thought they had never seen any one of the other sex so worthy of admiration. Custis, in his heart, returned the compliment, but hesitated to which to give the palm of beauty. He first turned his gaze on Laura, whose dark eyes, magnificent hair, and almost regal form struck him as equal to any he had seen in Spain, that land of glorious beauties. Laura wore the ancient Egyptian dress as seen on monuments, but modified so as to suit her peculiar beauty and not violate modern taste. Her attire sparkled with jewels, and, as she stood awaiting the approach of Custis, she looked every inch the Cleopatra who subdued Marc Anthony.

Clara's beauty, as well as her costume, was in an entirely different style She wore the oriental dress, consisting of the wide trowsers, the jacket with short sleeves, and the snowy cymar on the bosom. Her waist was confined by a superb cashmere shawl. Around her neck she had a necklace of pearls; and she wore a head-dress of the same pure material. Her tresses flowed in thick, wavy curls over her shoulders, a perfect wealth of gold. As Custis apapproached, her bosom began to heave, for she remembered Laura's taunt, and involuntarily she clasped her hands on it to still its tumultuous beatings. Thus standing, the color mantling on her cheeks, she looked almost a divinity.

"Ah! *ma belle* Laura," said Custis, giving her his hand, "I have not forgotten the way you used to tease me; nor have you forgotten that privilege of your sex, I see; for, by assuming the part of Cleopatra, you mean frankly to tell us, I suppose, that our hearts are at your mercy."

"And you," said Laura, briskly, "by assuming your present costume, intend to warn us that you have hearts for all."

He bowed low, and then turned to Clara.

"Pardon me," he said, "but this is surely my little wife—nay! no introduction, Mr. Villiers, you see I know Clara. Really, if you would not think it flattery, Miss Townsend," he continued, "I would say I think you have excelled even the fair promise of childhood."

The conversation now became general, Custis turning from one to the other of the cousins. Laura was gay, witty and animated, maintaining most of the conversation; but she failed to monopolize his attention as she wished: he continually turned to Clara to ask some question, which she answered generally in monosyllables, for the poor girl had not yet got over her confusion. She knew Laura's eye was on her, and that she should be taunted with these attentions as if it was a crime in her to receive them.

"What part do you intend to sustain, to-night?" said Laura, at last, and desiring to draw Custis away, she continued, "if you were attired a little more after the Roman fashion I might allow you to be my Marc Anthony, if on your best behavior."

She intended this is as a sort of a challenge, and expected Custis to take it as such; but he either did not, or would not see it, and answered—

"Fate as well as you are against me. I adopted this oriental costume in the whim of a moment, and now you tell me it prevents my doing my devoir to you as the Roman triumvir. Was ever destiny so hard?" And he bowed to Laura, but she could not tell whether seriously or ironically. "However," he continued, turning with a smile to Clara, "my dress will make a very passable Seyd, and I will do my best to deserve the rest of the character—that is," he added, with marked deference in his tone, "if Miss Townsend will permit me to aspire so high."

He offered his hand to Clara as he spoke, to lead her to the dance, a compliment which she blushingly accepted; while Laura turned away and bit her lip, her eyes flashing, and her whole frame quivering with rage.

Once freed from the malign influence of Laura's presence, Clara recovered her natural ease and simplicity of manner, and joined in the conversation with great spirit. She had read much, and thought more, and Custis was completely charmed by her. He had seen so much of fashionable females, that a soul nursed like Clara's in secret, had a strength, an originality, and a freshness about it, that drew him toward it with a strong feeling of sympathy, for he too had lived in the crowd, but not of it. Her conversation was so different from that usually heard in

ball-rooms, had so much solidity in it, and yet was so natural and sprightly, that when at last the mutual interchange of thought paused for a moment, he found to his surprise that he had monopolized Clara for an hour. He noticed many eyes directed on them, and saw at once that his attentions were marked; for Clara's sake, therefore, and lest the whispers of the room should embarrass her, he yielded her to another partner.

For there was now no want of admirers to the portionless girl. The attention of such a man as Custis was sure to introduce any one to notice; and the young men were astonished to find that they had not perceived before the extraordinary loveliness of Mr. Villiers' orphan niece. For the rest of the evening Clara was surrounded with beaux. The excitement of so novel a triumph gave additional lustre to her eye, and a richer bloom to her cheek, and long before the ball was over, she was conceded to be the belle of the evening. But nothing, throughout all the fete, gave her more exquisite pleasure than when she passed Custis in the dance, and received from him one of his smiles. It was like sunlight flooding her heart; every pulse thrilled deliciously. She went to bed that night thinking of Custis, and woke up in tears, for she dreamed she saw him married to Laura.

And what thought Laura? At first she was angry at Custis, and resolved to show it; but reflection brought prudence, and convinced her that in no way could she so easily drive him from her. Her indignation at Clara, however, knew no bounds, nor did she think it necessary to conceal this. Her manner was so haughty and overbearing in consequence, the next morning, that Clara was glad to retreat, from the private parlor they occupied, to her own chamber.

As early almost as such a visit was allowable, Custis made his appearance. Laura chose to take his call to herself, and concealing her mortification, strove to make herself as agreeable as possible. But on Custis all this was lost. He had asked after Clara on his arrival, and Laura had answered carelessly that her cousin was well: finding at last that she did not appear, he rose and took his leave.

He was to dine with the family that day, and when he arrived Clara was already in the room. Bowing slightly to Laura, he passed on regardless of her smile of invitation, and took his seat by Clara, who received him with blushing embarrassment. She had just heard of his visit in the morning, but from the manner in which it had been detailed to her, had imagined that it was intended for Laura; for she had not even been told that he had asked for her. The pang which her jealous cousin had thus inflicted, only increased, however, her present delight.

From that day Custis was always with Clara. In vain were Laura's attempts to draw him away from her cousin: he was true to his first preference; or rather true to that instinct which taught him to love amiability and avoid haughtiness and ill-temper. When Laura found that her scheme was hopeless, she vented her mortification and rage on our heroine. There are a thousand ways in which a person living in the same family with another, may render the latter miserable, without the world seeing anything of it. Laura perfectly understood this. Never had our heroine been so miserable as now.

Her troubles were increased by the sudden departure of Custis for New York, whither he had been summoned on important business. He was forced to leave at a few hours notice, and did not see Clara before he went: a hasty note with his adieus was all she received from him. She treasured this as a precious relic, for she could not longer conceal from herself that she loved. Laura added to her pangs by insinuating that Custis had only been trifling with her.

"A pretty match it would be—he a millionaire, and you not worth a sixpence," she said to Clara, with a toss of her head. "But if girls will be romantic and foolish, they must expect to suffer for it. I'll warrant that the business is only a plea to get off."

Clara left the room in tears. She could not deny to herself that there seemed some justice in what Laura said. It would have been easy for Custis to have written something more than a mere formal note—why did he not? Yet, when she recalled his manner, she could not believe but that he loved her? Alternating between such painfully conflicting views, she spent the miserable fortnight, which elapsed between the departure of Custis and their own return to New York. On the whole, however, her hopes declined. She had flattered herself at first that he would write to her, but he did not, and this completed her disappointment.

"Vain, foolish Clara," she soliloquized to herself, as she sat alone on the hurricane deck, her head leaning on her hand, and her eyes wondering vacantly over the water. "What madness it was in you to think that one so good, so accomplished and so wealthy, would stoop from his height to marry one so faulty, untaught and dependant as you. It is a bitter, bitter lesson," she mentally continued, while tears gathered in her eyes, "but the dream is past. I will meet my fate with resignation, and live on unloved and alone."

Tears were now flowing profusely from her eyes, and she drew her green veil over her face to conceal them. Just then a hand was laid lightly on her shoulder, and a well known voice, that thrilled to her inmost soul, pronounced the single word—

"Clara!"

In an instant every gloomy thought was forgotten, and she started to her feet, her whole face radiant with joy. Custis stood before her.

"Clara, and alone!" he said. "Why I have been searching all over the boat for you. I was advised by Mr. Villiers that you would return to-day, and so I came up the river to meet you; if you had been looking in the right way you would have seen me come on board at the last landing. I found Laura in the ladies cabin: she told me you were somewhere about; and then resumed her book. But now that I have found you," he continued, with animation, "I feel rewarded for my long search. But tears on your cheek, dear Clara—oh! what can you have to make you sorrowful?—is it that you regret the pleasures you leave behind?"

"Oh! no," said Clara, quickly: then she stopped

confused: she feared Custis would read more in her words than she wished him to know.

But she need not have been alarmed for her delicacy; for Custis, before they reached the city, was her declared lover. Sitting almost alone together on the hurricane deck, with twilight just fading in the West, and the moon rising in the opposite quarter of the firmament, he told his affection, and won from Clara a half whispered reference to her uncle, which he knew how to interpret.

"Of his approval, dear Clara, I have no doubt: I hinted at this in my last letter, and received his hearty consent by return of mail. As he was in the light of a parent to you, I did not think it right to proceed without his sanction, else, dear girl, I should have written to you of my hopes in the note I sent you, or at least addressed you from New York."

The wedding was not long delayed. Clara was universally pronounced the loveliest bride who had been married from St. Paul's that season. Happiness increased her beauty by lending a gayer sparkle to her eyes, and a brighter bloom to her cheeks. Laura officiated as one of the bridemaids, but could not restrain her spleen. This was the first occasion on which Custis had ever seen an exhibition of it, and when he and his bride were alone in the carriage, whirling off to his country-seat, where they were to spend the honey-moon, he said—

"I always thought that Laura was ill-tempered: she was so when we were children together. It was my memory of your amiability which first attracted me toward you at the ball; but every hour afterward I liked you better and better, until—you know the rest."

He kissed his lovely wife as he spoke, while Clara, with tears of happiness, hid her face on his bosom.

"EVIL INFLUENCES CORRUPT THE HEART."

ILLUSTRATED BY A FAIRY TALE OF FLOWERS.

BY FANNIE OF FARLEIGH.

How that bright fairy entered the apartment of the Lady Alice, no mortal can tell; for sometimes fairies glide on the moonbeams, or with their gossamer wings expanded are borne onward by the graceful zephyrs, far from their green and leafy homes in the wild wood. Or they freight with their tiny and fragile forms rich sea-shells, and with oars made of sparkling coral dash over the waves, so sportively that one might almost fancy them a happier race than their care-worn earth sisters.

Standing beside the Lady Alice, was one of the most beautiful of the dwellers in the fairy world. The glow on her cheek was like the delicate pink of the rose; her lips looked as though dyed in the red of the carnation; and her eyes sparkled like frozen dew drops. When she spoke, a strange and unearthly sensation thrilled the frame of her listener, and the tones of her voice seemed like Syren music distinctly heard, and dying away in the distance like the faint murmur of a wind harp.

"I have a warning for thee, lovely lady," whispered the fairy, "a sad tale to tell, of a withered rose that I watched and guarded; but alas! how vainly," and the beautiful fairy wept. By and bye she raised her head, and her words fell as gently upon the ear of the lady as the dew falls upon the flowers of even-tide. "I planted the rose, and day by day it grew and expanded under my watchful care. Its luxuriant leaves were the freshest green, and the tender bud it ere long displayed gave promise of rare beauty. The sun loved to warm with its genial rays the tender thing that required such careful nursing—and the wind swept by it with a more gentle motion, as though lulling it to sweet slumber. At first it was alone, but it was cheerless and desolate even for the heart of a flower to be thus left without other companionship, than those whole sole care was to foster its loveliness. I tempted to transplant it to a gay parterre, where bloomed the lily and the acanthus, the woodbine and the wild-rose. Dost thou mark me, lady?"

But the Lady Alice was wrapped in thought, she had gone back to the fresh days of her early childhood, and remembered the time, when like a fair flower she was fostered and kindly cared for by one who loved her; and in the tale of the fairy she seemed to be reading something of her own history. She almost feared to hear again, the echoes of that silver voice, as once more it broke upon the hush and quietness of the lofty apartment, saying, "dost thou listen?"

The Lady Alice in token of assent inclined still lower the fair head, which was resting on her white and jeweled hand.

"Ah! woe the day!" the fairy continued; "my rose, that now more than ever required my protecting care, was of course more or less in the power of all the fairies, and some of the artfully disposed among them whispered that she was the fairest flower that bloomed in the garden, and that the lily and the acanthus were but pale, puny things compared to her. With deepest sorrow, I saw the bud listen to such traitorous words of the sweet lily, and sadly regretted the swelling pride that inflated it. But I resolved if possible to avert the evil of such contamination, by regarding it more closely than ever. The nightshade and the deadly poppy grew beside each other, not far from my favorite flower, and over them presided the wicked ones in whose breathe is blight and mildew and all poisonous vapors. 'Why,' said the poppy, 'dost thou not hold up thy head and meet the burning glances of the sun?—poor, pale thing! the delicate pink of thy leaves but illy compare with the glowing scarlet of mine. Even the lady-slippers outvie thee; and dost thou not see the coral honeysuckle attracts the butterfly and the bright plumaged humming-bird? while thou art unnoticed and uncared for? Thou wilt live neglected, if thou wilt droop thy head like the lily lives whose shyness is so awkward.' "'And why,' said I, 'should my beautiful one care for the butterfly who but sports among the flowers? Are there not human hearts to cheer with its fragrance and loveliness? Is there no fragile being whose perceptions quickened and etherealized by an approaching departure to the world of spirits, would cherish as a treasure gift from the hand of love, the perfume that dwells in the heart of a rose? It would illy repay me for my care, should my flower but bestow its sweetness on the bird, or sport with the butterfly only.' But ah! lady, woe that I should say the sorrowful words, my poor tempted rose listened to the evil councils of the poppy, and drank in the flattery of the nightshade when it praised the deeper crimson which was now apparent in its unfolding corolla:—and ere long I saw with deep regret that ugly thorns were beginning to appear on the heretofore smooth, soft stem, and that the tenderest and greenest leaves were covered with slime, left by the trail of noisome caterpillars, who fed on the poisonous juices the poppy distilled."

The Lady Alice wept For she knew her own heart was once pure, and that by contact with idle flatterers and evil tongued sycophants she had become selfish and vain; and comparing herself to the rose it seemed as though these feelings were like the thorns, and pierced those who fain would have guarded her even as the fairy guarded it. But not yet had the fairy finished her story; a bright twilight

glow was in the apartment, and in the dimness she was almost invisible—yet still the Lady Alice heard her voice.

"I might yet have averted the evil," the fairy said, "could I have prevailed on my rose once more to yield to my influence only, for as I have said, having thrown her into that garden world, in which I knew it would one day be her lot to dwell, other spirits beside myself had power over her. But she resisted my entreaties, and at last as I looked into her heart more closely than was my wont, I saw therein a destroying worm. It was all over then. I knew the corrupt thing would eat out its freshness, and that blighted and fading she would lose all beauty, and die unnoted and uncared for."

Dimmer and more dim, grew the twilight in the apartment of the Lady Alice, until it gave place to the radiant light of the silver moonbeams. Still she moved not. The tale of the fairy had been to her as a written page of her own life. She too had gone out into the world, and day by day under its corrupting influences her heart had become the dwelling of discontent and selfishness; and like the worm, they were now feeding on its greenness and beauty. She had a better than a fairy watcher, a holier affection twined round her than the dream-fancy of a fairy—for her mother, a sinking consumptive, just without the portals of eternity, praying unceasingly that her own fair blossom might be spared the blight, which the breath of the *mere* worldling ever leaves, and from contact with such as these she would fain have shielded her. But alas! the work had begun, for strange to say, the Lady Alice was unthinking of her world's comfort. The sinking parent, left to the cold care of a hired menial, pined away her life, vainly hoping for sympathy from the daughter she would have laid down her all to save. Would-be friends enticed Alice, by some promised pleasure from the bed-side of her mother, and carelessly would she utter the measured sentence—"is there anything I can do for you?"—ere she departed to while away her evenings in heartless gaiety, excusing herself on the plea that nurse was never forgetful or inattentive to the invalid. "Anything ye can do?" Ah! daughters, there is the kindly word that is better than medicine; there is sweet sympathy to a sick heart, that is more refreshing than the balm of healing. Seat yourself beside the couch of a weary invalid, and recalling pleasant retrospections of the past, see how the languid eye will brighten, and how the thoughts, drawn gradually from present suffering, will dwell on days gone by, and the hope will come—ye can trace it stealing like a faint illumination over the care-worn countenance—that bouyant health may once more give token of its presence. Is not this "*something to do*" for the sufferer? Is it not something to lay the cool palm of the hand, lovingly against the brow heated by fever? Or to wipe away the moisture, that like tear-drops gather there, heralding the approach of death? Tenderly, ah! tenderly as a ministering angel came that sweet, yet sorrowing fairy to teach this lesson to the Lady Alice. * * * * *

"Has she yet gone," faintly whispered the consumptive.

"Nay, I am here—ever with thee from henceforth, mother, dear mother!" And while a gush of penitent tears burst from her overcharged heart, the Lady Alice told her twilight dream. And the fairy that entered while she slept prompted the interpretation thereof.

MY COUSIN GRACE.

BY MARY DAVENANT.

My cousin Grace was an old maid! She was just turning the unhappy corner that leads a woman into her thirty-fifth year, and settles her undeniably, and indisputably amongst that much abused class who have no right to expect either attention, admiration, or anything beyond bare civility from the other sex, however much they may be loved and valued by their own.

"A single woman of thirty-four!" exclaims some laughing beauty of sixteen—"why she is old enough to be my mother—what in the world can you find to interest one about her?"

Something, my fair lady, as you shall hear if you have patience with me and listen while I tell you. Beautiful and attractive as you may be with your sixteen summers, I doubt whether you are a particle more so in the eyes of any—except your lover, if you have one—than was my cousin Grace, who had seen her thirty-four.

And yet she had scores of lovers, for she was beautiful, high-born, and wealthy. She lived with her parents at their country seat. Althorpe is but little more than three miles from town, and from her early girlhood until now Grace had mixed largely in its most fashionable and aristocratic circle, which is in fact nearly half made up of her extended family connexions; among whom, gay, intelligent, cultivated, high-bred and beautiful as she was, she had always been a perfect idol—not the less so, perhaps, for the kind of interest and curiosity that was constantly kept up as to the chances of success shared by the various aspirants for her favor.

For the truth must out—my cousin Grace still liked admiration, yes, indiscriminate admiration both from young and old. She was a sad flirt—she laid herself out to please and to fascinate everybody, and she always succeeded. Even rival belles who envied her with all their hearts, admired her too—they could not help it. There was a charm in her voice, her glance, her smile, that was irresistible. Whenever she talked to you, you felt that you were the person whose society she perferred to that of anybody else—and so she did for the moment—and though you knew the next moment she might prefer another, the frank yet flattering look and tone told in the warmth you felt round your heart while under their influence, and you silently acknowledged she was a most bewitching creature.

Still the world in general, and especially her discarded lovers, would constantly add another expletive, an unfortunate, *but* that nullified all previous praise—"but thoroughly heartless." Heartless!—we who knew and loved her well knew that she was all heart, except to those who asked for it all, and her hand beside. Hers was a heart warm with every noble impulse, grateful, generous, affectionate, charitable even to profusion. Heartless! No, as I have said a hundred times, she has no heart to give, when none worthy of her is offered in return. No heart for the selfish, the vapid, the frivolous, the soulless who throng around her, and have the vanity to think they gain her love.

So I thought in the first years of my young experience of the world and its ways, but as time went on, and I saw more than one aspiring to her hand, whom even I, loving and reverencing her as I did, thought worthy to gain it, I began to wonder too, and silently observed and stealthily inquired whether some early blight or secretly cherished preference, had not deadened its susceptibility in that part alone where the female heart is most open to impression?

I was staying at Althorpe, and Grace and I were to go into town to a party given by one of our friends. We were in the habit of driving in and out again late at night, sufficiently protected by two faithful servants who had been many years in the family. This was to be quite a *recherche* party; the garden, which was a large one, was to be illuminated, and though Grace had complained of a headache through the day, neither she nor I had a thought of giving up going on that account.

Our toilettes were successful. Both my cousin and my glass told me I had never looked better in my life, and as she stood on the portico in the summer twilight in her exquisitely tasteful evening costume, a few cape jessamines amid her glossy curls, with jewels sparkling on her snowy neck and arms, while her India scarf was wrapped by her careful mother to screen her from the fresh night breeze that had just arisen, I thought I had never seen her look so beautiful.

There was a languid expression in her brow and eye, caused by the slight headache that affected her, which gave an indescribable softness to her expression, and after we were seated in the carriage, and were driving through the wooded entrance to Althorpe, I could not refrain from putting my arms around her and kissing her fondly. She placed her hand in mine and looked at me with deep affection, as she replied—

"I know you love me, Mary—and the most precious thing on this wide earth is love—love."

I felt her hand tremble in mine, and saw a tear glistening in her eye—but she laughed as she brushed it away, and began to talk gaily of our approaching pleasure.

On our entrance Grace was as usual surrounded by friends and admirers. Never had I seen her more brilliant or more gay. She danced frequently, and when she was not dancing flirted desperately. The

headache and the sadness were evidently gone, and her animated face seemed radiant with happiness.

I too enjoyed the party more than usual, for in the very beginning of the evening I made a new acquaintance who interested me extremely. He was presented by the lady of the house as Mr. Walsingham, and this was all I knew of him, except that he was tall, dignified, handsome, unusually intelligent, and seemed to have travelled all over the world. Indeed so absorbed did I soon become in the interesting conversation with which he entertained me, that I entirely forgot it was a dancing party, and that the earnestness with which Mr. Walsingham spoke and I listened, was effectually preventing any of my usual partners from asking me to dance—a matter that on common occasions would have annoyed me considerably. Still I was pleased when at last he observed that all the world seemed dancing, and asked my hand for the next cotillion.

My partner was evidently not a dancing man; it was plain he took no interest in the amusement, and went through the figures only for the sake of enjoying my society. My vanity was gratified, and I recollected with pleasure that I was very becomingly dressed, and looked uncommonly well.

It so chanced that my cousin Grace was our vis-a-vis in the dance, and on his making some observation on her appearance, I told him who she was and offered to introduce him. He answered slightly that she appeared so much engrossed with her partner, that it would perhaps be considered an interruption—"I am a very modest man," he added, smiling, "and will beg the favor at another opportunity."

I was surprised at this, for it was a rare thing if any stranger of note failed of an introduction to Grace. I looked at her partner with whom she did appear entirely engrossed, and my wonder increased, for he was a very common place person, for whom I knew she had not the slightest regard; while Mr. Walsingham drew me on to talk of her, and listened with an interest that seemed quite at variance with the indifference he professed to making her acquaintance. When our dance terminated, my hand was asked by another gentleman, and Mr. Walsingham disappeared among the crowd.

It might have been an hour afterward, when heated with dancing, I was just stepping through a large window which opened from the floor of the ball-room into the illuminated garden, when in one of the walks I observed a slight commotion, and as I hastened onward with my partner to discover the cause, I was terrified to see Mr. Walsingham striding toward the house, bearing in his arms the lifeless form of my cousin Grace.

The cry of surprise and distress brought a crowd round us, and among them the lady of the house, who begged Mr. Walsingham would allow some one to assist him in conveying his helpless burden up stairs to her chamber. It was almost with fierceness that he refused all aid. My cousin's head was on his shoulder, and her beautiful arms were lifelessly hanging round his neck. He gave not a word of explanation, but bore her amid the surrounding crowd up to Mrs. R——'s apartment, where having placed her on a couch, he bent over her, applying most skilfully the restoratives that were offered, and quietly but decidedly allowing no one to interfere with him.

After a short time Grace opened her eyes, and heaving a sigh looked around: her eye rested a moment on his face, and then closed again. "Thank God," he muttered, fervently, and without another word left the room. I was almost speechless with astonishment, while my cousin rapidly revived, and in reply to the numerous questions that assailed her—for no one had seen her faint or known the cause—she told us that feeling tired with the excitement of the crowd, she had retreated into the garden, and there she supposed had fainted, for that she knew nothing more until she found herself in Mrs. R——'s chamber—that she had had a headache, which I knew was true—that her fainting was nothing uncommon, which I knew was a fib—and finally that she then felt as well as she ever did in her life, and was determined to ride all the way home that night instead of staying where she was, or going to either of her sisters or to our house, which we all thought she had better do.

A wilful woman will have her way, and Grace had hers. She refused to allow any one but myself to accompany her home, and reiterating gay adieus and assurances that she was perfectly well, we both stepped into the carriage. What was my surprise to see Mr. Walsingham step in after us, and without a word of opposition from Grace, seat himself opposite to her, while the door closed upon us, and the carriage drove off. I heard a few murmured questions and answers beside me, while I drew myself as closely as possible into the corner of the carriage, endeavoring to solve as best I could the enigma of my cousin's conduct. It was plain to me that what I had for years suspected was the truth. There had been a disappointment and a secret preference, and while I was trying to hitch together my romance, the murmured conversation, with a few intervals of more expressive silence, went on between my companions until we reached home.

Then there was a tender farewell, a "God bless you, Grace," and Mr. Walsingham darted from the carriage, and I presume walked back to town in the bright moonlight. As soon as we entered the house, I gave my cousin a searching glance.

"Not to-night, Mary—not to-night—I have gone through too much," she said, in reply to my look of eager curiosity.

"But you are happy, cousin?"

"Only too happy," she said, embracing me affectionately—"far happier than I desire—so good night, love—to-morrow you shall know all."

And on the morrow I did know all, at least all that Grace could tell me, and Mr. Walsingham (who came even earlier than he was expected) not many days after told me the rest. Between them both I discovered it was Grace's passion for indiscriminate admiration that had interrupted the course of as true a love as ever was sung by bard or felt by swain.

There had, it seems, been a private engagement, which being suspected by some, was denied by Grace so earnestly, and disproved so plausibly by her pleased acceptance of the attentions of others, that her lover

had become jealous and remonstrated seriously with her, urging her to permit him at once to apply to her parents, of whose assent they were assured, and to announce their engagement. To this Grace would not consent, as she asserted women who were engaged were always neglected by other men, and she wished to enjoy her triumphs as long as possible. A misunderstanding was the result. Mr. Walsingham, proud, passionate, but still madly in love, had left the country convinced of Grace's heartlessness.

Still he could not tear her image from his heart. Restless, dissatisfied, he had wandered from country to country, "dragging at each remove a lengthening chain," until after twelve years wandering he had returned more devotedly attached than ever to the fair cause of his voluntary exile. Grace had heard of his return a few days before Mrs. R——'s party. They met as strangers. He watched her closely without appearing to do so, and detected a nervous excitement amid her gaiety, which led him to suspect it was assumed, and gave him a faint hope that he was not quite forgotten.

My answers to the few questions he had adroitly put concerning her had increased this hope, and he never lost sight of her from that moment. He witnessed her increasing weariness of the part he was now sure she was enacting, and at last saw her slip from her companions into the then quiet and deserted garden. She sought a secluded arbor, and he lost not a moment in following to know his fate. Her head was resting on her hands when he approached before her, and she was sobbing as if her heart would break. He took her hands in his, exclaiming—

"Grace! my own beloved Grace!—more beloved now than in the hour you promised to be mine—can you forgive me? God only knows what I have suffered, but a word from you will repay it all!"

Grace gave a slight cry—extended her arms toward him and fainted on his bosom. He made every effort to restore her, but finding all in vain, was obliged as we have seen to convey her where she could receive more effectual assistance.

The next day I was amused by listening to my grand aunt's reminiscences, and endeavorings to put things together, that she might satisfactorily convince herself that Grace had really loved Mr. Walsingham for so long a time.

"I am perfectly certain, my dear," she said, "that she behaved to him exactly as she did to her other admirers—at least I can recollect no difference. To be sure, after he went away, she had a nervous fever, but as it was full six weeks afterward I never thought of putting the things together—who would? And when she got well, which was not for a long time, however, she was just as happy and merry as before. I am sure I saw nothing strange in her refusing to marry. I was always very glad of it, and what I am to do now is more than I can tell."

A few weeks afterward I stood beside my cousin on her wedding day, and surrounded as she was by the young and beautiful, it needed not her rich bridal dress and flowing Brussels veil to render her the cynosure of every eye. She certainly did not look more than four-and-twenty, and the expression of heartfelt happiness, of deep tenderness, combined with the solemn, religious awe that rested on her face as she uttered the vows required of her, gave an almost seraphic expression to her always brilliant beauty. I cannot say more of Mr. Walsingham than that he was worthy of the treasure she then bestowed upon him, and that though she has now been three years a wife, Grace still thinks him so. The only shadow that rests upon her happiness arises from her regret that her silly love of admiration caused so many years of sorrow to the husband she loves with daily increasing affection.

Truth, however, compels me to confess that this repentance has not altogether produced amendment, for Mrs. Walsingham still continues to be as much admired as ever, aye, and to enjoy it too. It is not more than a fortnight since we were at a party together, when it was decided by a competent tribunal of connoiseurs in female beauty, that the handsomest woman present was my cousin Grace.

THE CHILD OF VISIONS!

BY JANE GAY.

On its cradle-couch a beautiful child was reposing! Smiles and shadows were flitting over its infant features like bursts of sunshine through broken clouds. It was a young bud of earth encasing a Heavenly dew-drop!

There was a low murmur like a dream-voice, and slowly the blue-veined lids were half-unclosed; and a pair of soft grey eyes looked timidly round from object to object. The weight of slumber was still heavy upon them, and the long lashes were soon laid again on the rosy cheek of childhood: but another murmur, and the tiny hands were outstretched, and the glance of the sleeper was upward. Gaze softly—it is the child's first vision! Angels are now fulfilling their earthly mission, and unfolding to this young heir of Heaven their first lesson from the book of Life. No wonder then that shadows mingle with the smiles of infancy, as they whisper that her new and untrodden pathway is onward from the happy Eden! No wonder she startles and murmurs as they reveal to her that the "Tree of knowledge of good and evil" has been plucked for her to eat—and that every taste will remove her further from the "Tree of Life," for whose blessed fruits she will ever be thirsting.

She awoke—but tears were in her eyes, and they called the child "Mary," though they wondered much why she should weep.

Years have passed. A group of fair young creatures are sporting amid the flowers and sunshine of June. The sky hangs over them its pure blue mantle, and the voices of myriad creatures are ringing with gladness; yet the band of young immortals are the happiest of all. But look! One has stolen away from the gay throng and pillowed her young head upon the green grass, while her mild, grey eyes are cast upward to the bright blue sky with a fixed and earnest expression. The pastime is no longer heeded—the ringing shout is unheard; for the child of visions is beckoned upward to higher companionship.

"Mary, Mary, don't desert your place so soon," cry a number of voices at once; "you promised to play with us this bright holiday"

But the child listens not to the voices of her companions—her dreams are above! A noble boy bends over her, whispering, "sister, come back!" but her look is still upward, and she heeds him not. He stoops and kisses her cheek, then exclaims, "run back to the goal, sister; we cannot play without you!" Then she murmurs, "yes, I see the goal," but her gaze is still upon the sky above her, and the green earth is forgotten. Vainly does that loving boy strive to arouse his sister from the deep revery into which she has fallen, for the angels are whispering mysteries which the gifted must learn.

That night the child pressed a feverish pillow, and many were gathered around her bedside. Until the grey of morning they watched and soothed her, but sleep came at length, and folded her in its quiet mantle, and they knew the danger was ended. When she awoke, the rose was paler on her cheek, but for the first time she comprehended that the seal of genius was stamped upon her; and she bowed her young head calmly and humbly to its inspiration—like a lily burdened with dew-drops.

Time has again sped on—and softly the twilight breezes are stealing through an open casement like angel-pinions, fanning the brow of a pale and dying maiden. It is the same fair brow of genius, but the shadows are all vanished now, and smiles like the setting sunbeams are gilding it with glory. The clear, grey eyes are lit up with Heavenly brightness, for the dimness has fled, and the last tear-drop has been wiped away forever. A home circle are gathered in that quiet chamber, and words of love are breathed forth from the heart's deep fulness. A manly youth sits by that lovely couch, and holds out the favorite offering of flowers. "They are beautiful," she murmurs: "cherish all things beautiful!" He spoke not, but pointed his finger to the last rays of the setting sun just fading in the deepening twilight, and again she whispers—

"Beautiful! My brother, may your last look on earth give promise of as bright a morrow."

"Mary is better to-night," said her mother, who watched the unwonted brightness of her countenance—"we will take her out to-morrow!"

Then long those loving ones held converse; and

the stars hung out their lamps in the arch of night. There was a sudden motion—and the eyes of the maiden were again lifted upward. They spoke to her, but she heeded them not. A low, child-like murmur broke on the still night-watchers, and again they heard the whispered "beautiful! 'T is the angel with the snowy mantle, that comes to me in dreams!" Then a breath of fragrance passed through that noiseless chamber like the odor of unseen flowers, and the marble features of the maiden were clad in spirit beauty.

It was her last vision! Those guardian watchers had come on their final mission, bearing an unsullied robe of Paradise for a pure and enfranchised spirit.

At day-dawn a band of weepers surrounded that snowy couch, and the morning light revealed the beautiful but faded tenement that for seventeen years had shrouded the Child of Visions!

THE CHEERFUL HEART.

A STORY FOR CHRISTMAS EVE.

"I cannot choose but marvel at the way
In which our lives pass on, from day to day
Learning strange lessons in the human heart,
And yet like shadows letting them depart."—MISS LANDON.

How wearily the little news-boy plodded along the deserted and desolate streets on that Christmas Eve! The cold rain was beating fiercely upon him, and a few tattered garments served but poorly to protect him from its rage. All day long had he been out amid the storm, and was now returning, weary and hungry, to his humble home. The street lamps were lighted, and as he passed by them you could see by the gleam that his face was pale and emaciated—could see that, young as he was, something had been there already to attenuate his features, and give him that wan and desolate look which can be given only by some great affliction, some pinching want or overwhelming grief. You could tell at a glance that a dark shadow was resting upon his pathway—a shadow out of which there seemed, just then, but litttle hope of his escape. Born amid poverty and wretchedness, and left fatherless while yet in his cradle, his life up to that hour had been nothing but misery—and the whole record of that life was written in his pale face and tattered rags. Yet with all this, as he passed along a close observer might have noticed a strange light in his clear, blue eye—an expression of kindly cheerfulness, such as we may not often see in this world of care and grief—for God's blessing was upon him—the blessing of a cheerful heart.

The sorrow of his life, however deep and abiding, the gloom upon his pathway, however dark and fearful, dimmed not the light that burned so quietly, and yet so steadily within. Like the Vestal fire of old, it grew not dim, but threw its rays far out over the great gloom around him—even now the cold storm beat upon him unheeded. There are waking dreams that come upon us sometimes when we least expect them—bright dreams of love, and home, and Heaven—beautiful visions of a future, all glorious with its burden of song and gladness!—and such a vision, of such a future, now filled and crowded and blessed the heart of that forsaken boy.

He was dreaming as he walked along of better days to come—of a time when the poverty in his pathway should depart, and the beautiful flowers should spring up to bless him with their presence—of a bright home far away from that great city, upon whose cheerful hearth the fire should not go out, and where hunger should never haunt him more. And then into that dream of a better life—into that vision of a cheerful home far-off among the green hills—came a pleasant face—the face of his beloved mother. He could see her as she sat by the lattice at the quiet evening hour reading the sacred Bible, with the last red rays resting like a glory upon her brow, while the rose leaf trembled at the window, and the little violets folded themselves to sleep. Very pleasant was the picture there passing before the gaze of that ragged child—very glorious the panorama of green hills and bright flowers and singing birds—very beautiful that humble cottage, half covered by the clustering foliage:—and his heart thrilled and heaved with a strange rapture never known before—such rapture, such joy as the stricken poor can *never* know, save when some good angel comes down from the blue Heaven and beckons them away from the haunts of woe and want in which they suffer, to the free air and the blessed sunlight.

But the dream had passed—the sun had set—the flowers faded—the cottage disappeared. Of all that beautiful vision, so cheering and so glorious, no trace remained; no vestige of leaf or tree or bird; no letter of his mother's Bible—no love-light of his mother's eye. The darkness came around him, and he found himself there amid the storm in the silent streets of that great and sinful city. So gathering his garments more closely about him, he hurried along to his home with a prayer upon his lip and God's sunlight in his heart. Turning into an obscure street, a few steps brought him to the door of a wretched dwelling, which he entered. Follow now and behold a scene of want and penury, such as may be found sometimes in this world of ours—a scene upon which men look with unconcern, but on which, thank God! the angels gaze with joy: a home where poverty struggles with a brave heart and is conquered.

Before the fire sat a pale, sad woman, upon whose features the traces of great loveliness were still visible, though sorrow had sharpened them somewhat, and ghastly want done much to dim their beauty. Upon her high and queenly brow the blue veins were clearly visible, as the blood coursed through them with unwonted rapidity. Her large, dark eyes were dim with tears. Some new sorrow had started afresh the sealed fountain of her grief—and now as she gazed silently upon the red embers in all the utter agony of despair, it might seem that hope had gone forever and God forsaken her.

"Mother! dear mother!" said the boy, as he entered all dripping with the rain, "I have come at last, and I am tired and hungry."

"My son! my son!" replied the mother, "there is no morsel of food in the house," and her lip quivered. "We must starve!—we must starve! God help us!" and her tears broke forth afresh.

Thus had it been for many a weary month. With

scarcely food sufficient to support life that mother and her boy had struggled, and suffered, and wept, and prayed—and now that the cold winter was coming on, no wonder that her heart shuddered and her cheek grew pale at the hopeless prospect ahead. How could they pass the dreary days and the long nights, the storm and the terrible cold, without food, and raiment, and shelter? And then where could they go when the heartless landlord should thrust them from their present wretched dwelling, as he had threatened to do on the morrow? Verily the gloom and the despair were great and fearful!

And yet even at that desolate hour an eye looked down from Heaven upon that friendless widow. There by the hearthstone—by the dying embers an angel hovered—an earthly angel, even in the guise of that cheerful child. For

> "Earth had its angels, though their forms are moulded
> But of such clay as fashions all below:
> Though harps are wanting and bright pinions folded,
> We know them by the love-light on their brow."

"Mother!" said he, "we will *not* starve. God has not forsaken us. There are better days to come—better days to come, mother! I saw it in my dream. Oh! I had so bright a dream, and in it I beheld your own dear self, and you were singing a pleasant song away in that blessed home. Oh! mother, cheer up! cheer up."

When the little boy lay down upon his wretched couch that dreary night he was changed. His mother's tears—his mother's great despair had transformed him from a suffering child into a strong-hearted man—from a weak and helpless dependant into an earnest, thoughtful worker. Henceforth his path was one of duty alone—and no allurement, be it ever so bright, could turn him from it. Before him glittered forever a guiding star: and his intense, absorbing gaze, neither the cares nor the pleasures, nor the vanities of life could for an instant divert. Existence had for him but one object, and his utmost energies were taxed for its attainment.

Never did the sun rise in greater splendor than on the Christmas morning following that night of hunger, gilding the spires and domes of the city with his rays. The streets were already rapidly filling with the gay crowd seeking pleasure, and men walked as though new life had been given them by the general hilarity and the bracing air.

In the most crowded street was the news-boy, but not the disconsolate, wretched lad who had plodded his way through the storm the night before to a desolate home and a supperless bed. You would not have recognized him as he hurried along, eagerly intent upon his avocation, and his face all radiant with the great hope that struggled at his heart.

That night joy visited the forsaken fireside. They had paid the landlord his rent, and still had sufficient left wherewith to purchase food. It was a merry Christmas for them.

Years came and went. Great changes had taken place. The boy had grown to manhood. High honors were conferred upon him. Wealth flowed into his coffers—his praise was upon every tongue. And at this very hour, upon the banks of the majestic Hudson, his mansion stands conspicuous among a thousand others for its taste and elegance.

He has but one companion—his aged mother—the lonely widow whom we saw some years since, gazing mournfully into the fire, and watching its flickering light. His influence is felt far and wide, and the poor and the wretched of every class and kind come around him with their blessings.

Thank God! Thank God!—for every suffering son of man, who thus comes up from the deep shadow of despair into the blessed sunlight, and, turning, gives his word of cheer to the groping millions beneath him.

Thank God! Thank God, that scattered here and there throughout the world in many an humble home may be found men and women, unto whom life presents but little of love, or hope, or joy, and yet who pass along amid its desolate paths without a murmur, sustained, and soothed, and blessed by this alone—A CHEERFUL HEART.

A. J. W.

COUSIN LIZZIE.

BY MRS. D. W. RHODES.

Cousin Lizzie had been with us from a child. She came from the city to our old country place in the spring, when the buttercups and spring beauties were hunted for in the meadows, and when, with our hearts tired of the long winter, and feeling as though released from a severe imprisonment, we sported in the sun the livelong day, keeping companionship with the birds and squirrels in the leafy woods. I can well remember her childish delight at all around her, so new and lovely; and I can also remember with what a warm welcome she was received in our group as a playmate.

Although she left an only sister in the city, cousin Lizzie soon seemed to forget all that could cause her to remember we were not her sisters also. Her desolate situation endeared her more to our parents. She well repaid our care and love; for like a gentle and pure spirit she moved among us, and in her kindness was irresistible. Thus she grew up in beauty and loveliness, until we were tall, young girls together.

I must acknowledge, in all candor, to the full awkwardness of a girl at that age, but it was different with cousin Lizzie. Her timidity hung around her like a beautiful veil. You felt that you caught glimpses of what that young spirit would be in time to come. If the bud was so beautiful, how splendid must be the flower.

It was at this time that a pressing invitation came to Lizzie from her aunt in the city to visit her. Anxiously we awaited Lizzie's decision. Between a love for her sister that even time and neglect could not wholly subdue, and a desire for change natural to all young hearts, she decided to go. With feelings of almost reproach I assisted her to prepare for her departure. At first I felt that she did not love us, or she would not be so willing to leave her country home. But the tears on her cheeks, and her earnest words as we stood beneath the trees the night before she left, removed all such feelings. We wandered on to all the old remembered places, as though Lizzie was never to see them more. By the soft moonlight we went down to the spring-house, where the water came gushing from the earth, and rippled away in the grass, until it came to the little waterfall, whose murmur could be heard from the window of our chamber. At last we returned to the house, and fell asleep in each others arms, feeling that no earthly trial equalled the one we were to pass through on the morrow.

We all accompanied Lizzie to the Hudson; saw her placed on the steamboat that was passing down; caught a glimpse of her beautiful face, all smiles and tears, and of a waving of handkerchiefs; and then she disappeared around a bend of the river. How desolate everything looked on our return. Something at every step reminded us of our loss. At evening prayers my father unconsciously turned around to ask Lizzie, as usual, to commence the hymn. My mother wiped away the tears she could not hide as the prayer went forth for the one that had gone from us. Month after month glided by, and we were awaiting Lizzie's return impatiently, when there came an invitation to myself from her aunt, saying Lizzie could not leave her until spring. I recognized Lizzie's kindness in it all, and awaited my mother's answer with a beating heart. Mother smiled, shook her head, consulted with my father, and at last consented.

What with the beautiful scenery, the excitement of travelling, and the visit to the city before me, I was almost wild with delight, in my passage down the Hudson. At last New York appeared in view, with its spires, its public buildings, and its shipping. We neared the wharf, entered the crowded dock, and in a few moments all was confusion. One after another passed to shore. Friends came after them all, but none for me, and desolate and solitary I crept into a corner of the cabin, and awaited with a feeling of loneliness never known before, for some one to come for me. At last a gentleman appeared inquiring for me. I sprang forward, ready to welcome any one. We hastened through the crowd, entered a carriage, and were soon passing down the street all of streets, Broadway. The ride seemed interminable. But at length the carriage stopped. I was almost carried out, and before I could enter the hall, there stood cousin Lizzie ready to welcome me! I knew she was not changed by that beautiful smile, by the kind and sisterly tone of her voice; and I wept happy tears on her breast before I could speak my joy. The parlors were one blaze of light, and filled with guests; but my journey was sufficient apology for us to steal away to our own room; and there we sat unmindful of everything around us hour after hour.

I found Lizzie the same gentle, loving creature, but oh, how much more beautiful and womanly! There was a dignity indescribable in every movement, in every tone, and something I could not define dwelling in those dark, lustrous eyes, and playing around her small, child-like mouth. I was not wise then, and knew not that changes in the heart effect magical changes in the countenance. We were still sitting by the fire busily talking of all that had passed, for we had so much to say, and so much to ask, that I had not even thrown off my shawl; and Lizzie, half leaning forward with her hand on my shoulder, tears in her eyes, and her voice tremulous with affection, was speaking of home and my parents, when the door was opened and a young girl entered. I knew she

was Lizzie's sister by a resemblance, which though difficult to define, for they were certainly very different, yet was visible at the first glance. Miss Leslie looked at us both with an inquisitive, searching glance, as though she could read our thoughts, and then sat down beside us. I had never seen so beautiful and queen-like a creature before. Her manners were at first lofty and rather dashed with haughtiness, but that wore off, and as she conversed with us I was fascinated in spite of myself. Yet, when she left us, we both felt relieved. I had no experience, no knowledge of the world, but I felt there was no sympathy between us. I knew intuitively that woman's character. Designing, dark and treacherous, as Lizzie was open, pure and trusting, how could two sisters be so unlike!

I was soon in the whirl of fashionable life. Days and weeks flew by. Lizzie's aunt was kind and indulgent, and appeared to love us both as her own children. Evening after evening we were carried from pleasure to pleasure; yet when the excitement of the day was over, in our own room Lizzie and I had our hours of quiet enjoyment; and in those times of sisterly confidence how beautiful appeared the heart of my cousin! She told me of her aunt and sister, whom she loved dearly, and then hesitatingly spoke of a nephew of her aunt, who was then absent. He had been brought up with her sister, and was as a son and brother in the family. Then, even as I suspected the truth, with a modest drooping of the eyes and a blush on the cheek, she told me of their love; yet when she spoke of *him*, those beautiful eyes were lifted so full of nobleness, confidence and affection, that I could almost have worshipped her in her love and purity.

That love, so well requited, so pure and holy, how beautiful it made her! Love had unsealed the inexhaustible fountains of her heart. It shone in her eyes, trembled on her lips, and rested on her brow with such a regal beauty, as at times entirely to change her appearance. I had yet to see the object of all this love. The parlors were crowded with company. Lizzie, with bright eyes and flushed cheeks, was carrying all before her with her wit and vivacity, and I was noticing from a little corner the emotions that stole over her face like light and shadow. Suddenly a stranger drew near her, and I knew by the deathly paleness and then the sudden glow, by the silence and then the constrained attempt to renew her light-hearted conversation, that it was the one she loved. She scarcely noticed him as he entered, but as the company gradually withdrew they were left the last. I had been in my room sometime, and was dreaming of home and happy faces, when a light footstep awoke me. Lizzie was on her knees beside my bed. Her arms were flung around my neck, and as I raised her head, the happy tears upon her cheeks told me of her complete happiness.

Lizzie's engagement with Mr. Eldron, the young and talented lawyer, the possessor of thousands, was soon known. All congratulated, all prophesied happiness:—all but one, and that one her sister Isabel! I noticed her often as she sat watching those happy spirits. There was none of that holy love felt for a younger sister, none of that perfect peace that steals over our hearts in seeing those we love made happy, depicted in her countenance. All was storm and passion in that wayward heart, and I felt that Isabel had loved him first. But she was not one to give up lightly. *She* was the gayest of them all. Lizzie's happiness was quiet and subdued, she was content to sit in a corner uncared for and unnoticed, with her heart brim full of happiness and love, that gushed forth to every one near her. But Isabel was queening it over them all. I even saw her in her madness trying to throw her fascinations over her sister's lover. But Lizzie, pure, confiding Lizzie, saw nothing in it all but sisterly love, and said in her winning way, "she was so glad her choice had met with her sister's approval." Of that one so well beloved, I have said nothing. It is enough to say that he was worthy of it all, and that never had I seen another to whom I would have so willingly resigned my beloved cousin.

Isabel had no confidants. She treated me after months had passed under the same roof with the same reserve. She wished me to admire her, to be dazzled by her beauty, her accomplishments and intellect, but she asked not for love. I distrusted her more and more. I felt it a holy and sacred charge to watch over cousin Lizzie and her interests, but I could not breathe one word of my suspicions to her. How could I tell her that one so dearly loved repaid it all so illy? How could I show to her pure heart one of the blackest pages in the world's book! Thus I lulled my cares to rest.

It was a dismal, dull day. Lizzie was not well when Mr. Eldron called, and I went down to make her excuse. Hastily entering the room I saw Isabel standing before Mr. Eldron. Her hand was raised threatingly, and her face was so full of anguish that I almost uttered a cry. Isabel was too well skilled in dissimulation, however, not to overcome her emotions; but Mr. Eldron, little accustomed to deceit, started and blushed, and scarcely hearing my words, hastened from the house. There we stood face to face; and with newly awakened suspicions I looked into Isabel's eyes, with a gaze so indignant that it required all her courage to summon a look of defiance as she turned away. Isabel felt that my eye was upon her, and she was more prudent; but my suspicions were only strengthened. And yet suspicions of what? Henry Eldron's love was still the same. I could not doubt him when I saw the eagerness with which he awaited Lizzie's appearance Still, at times he gazed into her eyes with a look so inquiring, so almost reproachful, as though he must tell her all that was in his heart. And yet I was silent! Strange infatuation—hateful prudence! The time was drawing near when the storm was to burst over our heads.

Spring was coming, beautiful, lovely spring. I was tired of the city, of its noise, confusion and mirth. My heart was at home with the early flowers, the bees and birds, and all the charms that spring throws around the country. But I had promised to bring Lizzie home with me, and I could not resist her pleadings to stay for a while longer. Several families were to remove to their residences on the Hudson, and we also were to accompany them. If we had enjoyed ourselves in the city, how much more

would we among the beauties of nature. It seemed like home to me. I welcomed the birds, the flowers, and the trees as old familiar friends, whom long absence had only made the more dear. Little assemblies met night after night at these country mansions. Friends came up from the city. There was nothing but enjoyment. I remember our last evening at a friend's, and remember it as though it was yesterday. Those beautiful sisters stood before me arrayed for the evening. Isabel was leaning against the window, with her dark eyes bent on us, as I was arranging a wreath among her sister's hair. The soft light of a lamp fell over her. There was a wild light in those dark eyes, a fever glow on each cheek contrasting with the marble brow, over which hung dark curls half concealing the exquisite profile, that was turned toward me. The lips were firmly compressed, as though to keep back the thoughts that must escape them, and even over all that beauty hung a shadow of unhappiness and evil. Her dress of rich satin, that caught the color of a blush rose, among the rich, heavy folds: the overdress of delicate lace, falling half over the dress and drooping over the arms, was looped up on the shoulders with diamond clasps. Brilliants were among her dark hair. Thus attired, in her stern, haughty attitude, she looked a perfect queen. The wreath was placed among cousin Lizzie's bright curls, and she bounded from her seat and stood before us on the low window seat that overlooked the gardens. Her dress of thin muslin floated in the night wind, as it lifted the curls from her neck. Here and there a white rosebud of the wreath peeped out like a beautiful pearl. Pearls lay on the neck and arms, not more pure than the wearer; and in her light, graceful attitude she seemed as a spirit ready to leave us. Her dark blue eyes had a half pensive, half joyous light, telling that the heart was brim full of happiness, yet that she would repress it. The purity, the goodness that dwelt in the heart of my cousin rested on her face as though angels had been communing with her. How lightly our hearts bounded as we kept time to the music with our feet. I could see Lizzie moving through the waltz like a spirit of light. I could see the happy face of her lover as he watched her at a little distance, and how could sad thoughts dwell in my heart! No—I cast them from me and entered with a joyous spirit among the dancers.

Isabel I had not seen for some time, and wearied of the exercise, noise and nonsense, I stole away, and almost in a dream, found myself in a room far from the gay throng. There was no light save the moon shining through the muslin curtains, and throwing shadows on the walls around me. The windows looked upon the gardens, and I could see among the trees white garments floating, and hear now and then a silvery laugh. I could hear also dancing feet that had moved to the merry music, and now could not refrain from tripping over the gravelled paths. The scene was enchanting. I leaned my burning brow on the stone before me, with my spirit wrapped in a sort of ecstasy. I was awakened from my reverie by steps beneath the window. Isabel's voice was heard, and ere I awakened to full consciousness I had listened to words that fastened me there like a spell.

"Cousin Harry," she was saying, "you do not know Lizzie. You do not know how I have mourned over this lightness of spirit—there is no depth of feeling in her heart—and educated among such good, plain persons, do you blame me that I was surprised and indignant to find such mercenary feelings were her motives?"

I had unconsciously thrown myself further forward. I could see Isabel, as she stood in the moonlight. I could see also, upturned to me, the agonized features of her sister's lover. They were deadly pale, and the agony pictured there would have moved a heart of stone. But again I heard Isabel's clear, measured tones; and I caught the flash of her dark eyes, as she pressed closer to his side.

"You ask me for proofs. Do you think I would have dared to destroy your happiness—that I would have torn away the veil from your idol on a slight suspicion? No—here is an unanswerable proof," and she placed a letter in his hand.

"It was written to a cousin, and I found it," continued Isabel, "on her desk. See how she dwells with rapture on the advantages of her situation as the wife of Henry Eldron—with what levity, what girlish frivolity she speaks of silks and laces, diamonds, and all the trappings that she seemingly despises. Is not this enough? Is this the kind, pure, trusting love that could meet with your's as a kindred spirit? Is this what your heart pines after?"

I heard a groan, almost a sob, and Eldron leaned against a tree for support. There was indignation and horror striving in his countenance—indignation that any one should dare to speak thus, and to him of one so dearly loved, one whose image he had jealously enshrined in his heart as all that was good and pure—horror as proof after proof came up before him. His voice was low, and so changed that I started.

"Why do you speak thus of your sister?" he said. "What am I to you, that you should sacrifice sisterly affection, and trample on every natural feeling for my sake? Why have you not told me of this before? Answer me," he added, sternly, as he gazed in her face, "and you will rue this if it is not true."

But Isabel's courage did not forsake her. Her look was at first indignant; then, as though moved by pity, it became more earnest; and her voice fell to a whisper.

"What is my sister to me?" she replied. "We knew nothing of each other until now. We cared nothing. We were separated, taught to think of each other as strangers. But you—I have spent my life with you. You have been more than brother. Years of kindness and attention have strengthened a friendship that far exceeds love for my sister. Say—is it not natural? Could I hesitate to sacrifice a sister that cares nothing for me, to a kind, generous brother, and that too when I had virtue and truth to uphold me?"

I could not bear to look upon his face. I heard the murmured words, "I will see her." There were hasty steps on the walk, and I heard Isabel's pleading voice. "Promise me not to reveal my part in this," and then as though to lull every suspicion she added,

"how could I bear her reproaches, her anger," and I heard him promise.

All was lost, and yet I could not move. I stood idly there. Oh, that paralyzed feeling of the soul, that inability to act when the heart is chilled and the brain on fire! I could not rouse myself. I heard steps in the room, the spell was broken. It was but the work of a moment to step on the balcony, to rush down the stairs, and to possess myself of the letter flung upon the dewy grass and forgotten. Then flashed upon me all the power, the subtlety of that woman. Had I not known Lizzie from childhood, had I not tested the principles and purity of her mind, even I should have been shaken at the proof of that letter. It was Lizzie's own writing apparently. I could detect no imitation, and with a scream that came unconsciously from my aching heart, I turned again to the crowd. Lizzie was gone, and I trembled and drew back at Isabel's voice and touch, as though she had been a serpent.

We hastened home. Lizzie was not there, and I could only sit down and wait with a beating heart. I had remained but a few moments when there were footsteps on the stairway, the door was opened, and there stood Lizzie. How changed! She leaned against the door for assistance. The color had left her cheeks, her eyes were dilated and wild with horror. In that countenance I read all. I sprang to her side, but she pushed me back, and putting her hand to her head fell helplessly forward with a scream I shall never forget. All was confusion. We placed her beside the open window, and in agony awaited her return to life. There we stood, and she, the destroyer, was among us! Her white lips were apart, and the breath came gaspingly as if there was a weight on her heart. Oh! the wild look of her eyes haunts me now.

The tempter was in my heart, and my first impulse was to accuse Isabel of her crime; but my eyes fell on the lifeless, sweet face of my cousin, and I felt this was no time for accusation. Hours passed on, and when daylight came dimly in through the half closed curtains, cousin Lizzie's eyes languidly opened, and there was a hope that she would yet live. I was at her side, and the sad sweetness of her smile nearly broke my heart, for I felt she would not be with us long. Isabel had stolen away from the window, and I could hear her sobs. She did not dare to approach her wronged sister, and when she raised her head, years seemed to have passed over it since the evening before. Retribution had commenced.

When we were alone, Lizzie's lips moved feebly, and she endeavored to tell me all; but I placed my finger on her lips, and to soothe her lay down beside her. But I could not control her, and she would speak. She told me of harsh words he had spoken, of his reproaches that she loved him only for his wealth, that he was to depart from her never to return.

"And oh! Ellen," she said, "he cursed me for my duplicity, said that I had embittered his life forever, and I—I stood like one in a dream—I could not comprehend that he was speaking thus to me. What, Ellen, have I done, except to love him too well? Tell me, Ellen, is it not a horrid dream, and will it not pass away?" and she twined her fingers among my hair, and smiled so vacantly that I trembled.

What could I do but fold her to my heart, whisper words of comfort, and say "it would all be well," although my heart misgave me. The truth would have killed her, and I yet hoped the deceived lover would return. No one had thought of him through the long, dark night, but at early dawn I had sent for him to the city. I lulled her to rest, and she finally slept on my arm like a wearied, troubled child. Can you imagine my feelings at that hour? There lay the once gay, happy Lizzie, a broken and crushed spirit. She was still in her evening dress. Even the wreath had not been removed, and the buds lay drooping and faded in her hair, fit emblem of the wearer! The delicate dress was soiled and torn, and the pearls on her throat and arms lay scattered on the rich covering around her. All this served to render that sad beauty still more sad. Some one entered, I dared not look up, I heard the words, "Mr. Eldron had left for Europe." There was no scream, no word from the broken-hearted girl beside me; but by the sudden paleness of her face, by the trembling of her form from the agony within, I knew she had heard all. She knew that all was lost. I could only wait patiently and see the young flower fade before my eyes.

Her first words were feeble as a child's.

"Let us go home, Ellen," she said. And oh! how gladly I obeyed. Would that I had never left it.

We were at home. It was a beautiful summer day. The glad sunshine came in through the open window, and danced on the leaves of the white rose tree before the porch. We could hear the bees humming amid the flowers, and the singing of the birds, so still was that little group within! There was my mother with the Holy volume before her, and the blessed words stole forth to the young sufferer. Tears were falling on the Holy Book—yes, my mother's voice was firm, for her trust was in Heaven. Our father, sisters, and brothers were there, hushed and silent before the presence of death.

I could not even shed a tear as I gazed on that angelic face, pale in approaching dissolution. Calmly the air stole in, and so calmly rose her voice, one would have thought it the whispering of the breeze. I bent over to hear her last words.

"Tell *Harry*," she said, "that I died true to him, and that I knew all would be known in Heaven. I know he will come for me soon, and when his grief is hard to bear, cheer and support him. Tell him how I loved him, that there was not one reproach, or unkind thought in my heart."

There was a sound of carriage wheels on the road, a sudden shutting of the garden gate, hasty footsteps on the walk, and dusty and weary Isabel stood before us! Her step was eager, and she sprang into the room excited and trembling. But even she caught the spirit of the scene. No words of welcome were given to her, no smile of recognition, and the guilty girl stole away to the bedside and knelt beside her sister.

Lizzie meantime had become unconscious of things around her. She had heard no steps, nor even the new comer. Her voice grew louder and more clear,

and as though she was communing with herself, she added—

"I know there has been some mistake, a veil has fallen over his eyes, but all will be made clear, and he will revere my memory if nothing more."

She spoke so beautifully of their brief, bright dream of happiness, and of the greater happiness when he should rejoin her, that we were all melted to tears. There was no doubt or mistrust in her heart. Peace rested on her face, and blessed her words.

Isabel's sobs had ceased. She had risen to her feet and stood before us. She looked at no one. That wild light was again in her eye, and her lips trembled. I knew the spirit could not rest.

"I did it all, Lizzie," she almost screamed. "It was I. I—I loved him more than life, I loved him long before I saw you, and I had hoped he would yet be mine. I told him you loved but his wealth, I wrote false letters, I arrayed even his pride, his love against you. I had hoped to win him to myself, but—my God—I forgot there was no happiness for the wicked. Curse me not, my sister, curse me not, for I am already cursed. It would be happiness to die, but I must live with this weight upon my soul. Let me not go to my grave with your hatred!" and she fell helplessly forward beside her sister.

The peace of God had rested on the spirit of my cousin. Earth and earthly things could not call back the mind to their tumult and agony. She heard, but comprehended not, and with her hand lying tenderly on her sister's head, she went from us to her rest in Heaven.

ALICE LINLY.

BY CATHARINE RAYMOND.

CHAPTER I.

"And so Alice is going to the city, Mrs. Linly," asked Susan Brown, the village seamstress, and a bit of a gossip too withal.

"For this winter," was the quiet reply of her lady-like employer.

"Well I never!" pursued Susan, letting her work drop on her lap, and lifting her hands; "I did hear you was a-going to send the girl away—but I just said to myself, I wont believe any such nonsense till I hear it from herself!"

"And why nonsense, Susan?"

"Why to think of letting such a young, pretty, hair-brained thing, go among all kinds of wickedness, away from her mother and her comfortable home, to learn new manners, and so catch a husband who will never let her come back to her simple home! Why you might just as well bid good-bye to her at once!"

"Not so, Susan. Alice is simply going to her aunt, to stay six months in closer retirement than she lives even *here;* and to pursue her studies under more competent instructors than Brookfield affords. I hope to see my darling Alice return, if changed at all, for the better," and a tear glistened in the mother's eye.

The Linly's were a small and happy family; Dr. Linly was a physician—the only one the village boasted. They lived unostentatiously and quietly; but the gentle tastes of the mother and Alice threw around and over the house the sunshine of simple refinement.

At the time our story commences, Alice Linly was seventeen, radiant with health, beauty and happiness; drinking joy from every source; gathering honey from every flower. Her character was an uncommon one—combining many fine characteristics with others which made her parents, especially her mother, watch over her with deep solicitude. Sensitive, tender and true; generous, elevated and courageous in her actions; enthusiastic, visionary and excitable to the last degree —Mrs. Linly saw how hard the pathway of life would be unless Alice attained that self-control in which she was wanting, and which it had been the mother's aim from her infancy to instil in her breast. And Alice strove hardly for it. Hitherto she had experienced none but childish troubles, and over them she had sometimes failed. Time alone would prove whether in *deeper* joy or sorrow the precepts of her childhood would govern her life.

After Alice came a sister; then a brother. There was another brother, some years older than our heroine, but he was in the city, engaged in business in a mercantile house of celebrity. How the girl had wept, when two years ago, Jack had gone away; but now her eyes danced joyously in anticipation of a meeting, and she flung her arms in a transport of joy around little Willie's neck.

"Why I *guess* you thought I was Jack!" exclaimed the boy, so soon as he could extricate himself from her embrace—peering roguishly up into her large, brown eyes—shaded by lashes tipped with gold!—*maybe from the sunlight ever streaming from the orbs beneath*, as Jack had once said half playfully, half earnestly.

CHAPTER II.

And Alice went away from her childhood's home to the great, bustling city! Sad were the tears she shed as she nestled in her parent's arms, and sad for a time her meditations after the parting. But the girl was as Fanny Forester beautifully says, a *genuine honey gatherer*, and so the light stole again beneath the bright curtains of her eyes, and the color trembled again within her oval cheek.

The fair girl wrote often, and spoke gratefully and affectionately of her aunt, and rapturously of her brother, who, she affirmed, was "just the same dear, merry fellow," and his bright, black curls the same as ever! It seemed so natural to run her fingers through the shining masses. "And dear mother," she wrote, "I could not help thinking what a splendid soldier Jack would make! It is such a pity he is not one!"

Then the girl went on to speak of her studies in the same glad strain; but every few moments reverted again to "dear, handsome Jack!"

Alice had been nearly six months in the city, and was about returning home, when she went, one evening, to the elegant mansion of Mrs. Horton, an intimate friend of her fashionable aunt, who had seen

the secluded beauty, and felt a romantic disposition to "patronize" her.

The guests, with the exception of some half dozen, were complete strangers to our heroine. Her hostess introduced and introduced, and doubtless intended to make her acquainted with all; but probably became weary, or forgot some in the endless throng; and so it was that the noblest star athwart the giddy circle remained *unintroduced* and unaware of her presence. For Alice shrank from observation, and remained in one of the vast parlors; and the complete realization of her "ideal" scarce moved from the corner, in the other room, where were gathered round him an admiring crowd, listening to his strange eloquence.

"Jack do tell me who that gentleman by the piano is?"

"What the one with light hair?"

"Oh, no! The one with those splendid eyes! Can't you see how their light seems to fall on those around him? Now he is talking to Madame L——."

"I do not know him, sister mine, but as you seem 'clean daft' on the subject, I will make inquiries. Mrs. Horton," turning to that lady, and disregarding with a mischievous smile the effort Alice made to keep him back, "Mrs. Horton, Ally wants to know who that superb cavalier in black is? There, in the other room!"

"What! enchanted *ma beaute?*" playfully tapping her under the chin with her fan, "that is Mr. Conrad Etherington! Wait a moment! I will bring him and introduce him. It was a strange oversight in me not to make the 'lion' acquainted with the 'lioness!'" moving away as she spoke.

"Oh, pray don't!" cried the alarmed girl, springing after and detaining her.

"Why not! But I will!" laughing at the girl's consternation.

"Oh, *do* not, do not!" pleaded Alice. "You forget that I am but a simple child, unlearned in the ways of the city; indeed I would much rather not! The knowledge of its being a premiditated thing, would make me awkward and confused. Please do not; I am very happy as I am, and you would not destroy all my enjoyment," looking up with her coaxing eyes.

"You are a strange, silly girl; but if you would really not be introduced, I suppose I must indulge you, though it is such a sacrifice that I hardly know how to forgive you," looking admiringly down at the deep bloom on the agitated girl's face.

"Thank you, thank you!" exclaimed Alice, sinking back upon a couch with a look of relief.

Yet that evening, whenever Alice Linly was free for a moment from the admiring throng, did she follow with her *intense* and earnest gaze the noble form of Conrad Etherington, who with his quiet, *almost* holy brow, his deep, dark eyes, and firm, proud mouth, fixed himself, although unconscious, not the less securely, in the fond memory of the young and ardent girl. She saw him not again till the last evening of her stay. He was a superb musician, and seated at the piano when the girl entered the room. She had not expected to meet him, and silently retreating to a corner of the room, listened for a long time with clasped hands, and parted, breathless lips! and the stream of melody which issued from the noble instrument bore away on its deep and troubles waves the heart of Alice Linly!

"Gone, gone!" murmured the girl to herself, as she paced her apartment that night, and pressed her cold bosom which gave no throb back from its marble depths with her small, slender fingers. "Gone from me, and in a few short hours I shall be far way! My heart! Oh! why did I leave my happy home?"

CHAPTER III.

"ALICE! Alice!" shouted Willie Linly, as a carriage stopped at the door! "Alice!" flinging wide open the hall door, and receiving the first caress of the impatient girl as she sprang heedlessly from the steps. And then *mother* came and folded her as of old in a close embrace; gazing the while with tears upon the glowing face of her darling. And soon Alice was seated as of old, the centre of an admiring home circle, describing with all the force of her warm and vivid imagination, the life of the last six months.

"Ally," said her father, as she wound her arms around his neck that night before retiring, "thank the good God that thou hast come back unchanged! and pray that long mayest thou continue to be our love, and hope, and comfort—as thou now art."

"Not changed did he say? And I must pray to continue so!" murmured the girl to herself when alone. "Oh, but I am not the same! I will pray Heaven that I may go back to where I stood in thought and feeling, but a few short weeks ago."

Alice Linly *was* changed! Not outwardly as yet, but within the deep, well springing waters of affection lay roused and troubled.

Mrs. Linly saw this quickly. Her temperament so resembled her daughter's that a breath could not ruffle the calm of her darling's life, and she not perceive it. If Alice was wakeful at night, though her apartment was far from her mother's, so surely would sleep fly the parent's eyes, and a few quick steps bring her to her daughter's pillow to calm her unquiet girl.

Alice Linly was young yet—but a child—scarce eighteen. We have said she was enthusiastic and visionary. She was so—and she deemed it in her ignorance a light thing to throw out the full tide of her affections on a romantic object. It accorded precisely with her unformed and unreal ideal. She knew not till the deed was done how hard it is to draw back the heart to a home it no longer values. Foolish girl! was it for an affection which received no nourishment she had cast away happiness? At first she vaguely dreamed her love might find return. What though Conrad knew her not! She *hoped* he might. In all her favorite romances "things had turned out right" at last, and Alice firmly believed they were pictures of real life, (she *would* not think otherwise) and that she saw at last should win her guerdon; still months rolled away, and she found health and strength, and spirits failing before her spirit's struggles. Then despair suddenly seized on her. She ceased to hope, and pined swiftly and surely! a few months longer and Alice Linly had been at rest had not a sad event occurred which roused and bore away the girl from

self: called up the self-control so long forgotten, and changed her whole character for life. That event was the sudden decease of Dr. Linly by an apoplectic seizure.

Susan Brown had her usual complement of gossip on the subject; but now no one heeded her, for the "doctor" was universally loved and respected. He was borne away to his last earthly abode before Mrs. Linly recovered from the despairing stupor into which she had fallen on his death.

When at last she comprehended that he whom she loved she should *here* see no more, her grief was heart-rending! For a while she shed no tear. "Oh, if she could only weep!" exclaimed one of the sympathizing women, who had taken upon themselves the charge of affairs. At that moment Alice appeared.

"Don't let Alice go near her," whispered Susan Brown, to a kind-hearted creature, who with tears in her eyes beckoned her approach, "it will only make her feel worse to see that ghost of a daughter who will go next."

The mother heard the cruel words; she glanced up at the pale face of her child.

"Alice, Alice! you *must* not die!" and she stretched out her yearning arms.

"I shall not, mother! weep here on this bosom."

And like a child the enfeebled woman poured out her griefs upon the light form of her darling. "It did her good!" Another day and though still sorrowing deeply, she was calm and composed, and able to attend to all necessary arrangements for their removal to the city, whither, by the advice of her son and best friends, it was thought best to go. There was but little left for the family. But Jack had obtained a small share in the business with which he was concerned; and Alice had expressed her intention of turning her education to account as day governess—a situation offering most opportunely in the city, which could be procured—and then Dora and Willie would have the benefit of good schooling, and so be enabled, in *their* turn, to cast in their mites.

When once a change was determined upon, Mrs. Linly was not long in carrying it into operation; and in a short time the family was quietly settled in the city. Then came a time of bitter trial for Alice! How she struggled for mastery over self! Grief for her father's loss had at once incited her to action for others, and paralyzed her feelings—while amid the bustle of the funeral and the removal, leisure had not been afforded her to indulge them; but now the usual routine had resumed its sway in their orderly household; rendered more serious than ever of course by their late affliction. The weight of years sat on the mother's brow; and hushed were the merry voices of the children—at least in the family circle. And Alice, as every morning rose, and she returned to her arduous duties among a set of riotous, thoughtless children, felt her very *soul* sink in prospect of the long, long day, few minutes of which were hers, either bodily or mentally.

When her pupils gathered round her, then she must cast thought behind her, and attend to their studies; and when school labors were over there were others at home, numerous and varied, which fully occupied hand and head, if not *heart*.

To soothe the aching brow of the drooping widow was hers; to force the tongue to speak which would fain have been silent, and strive by gentle, cheerful conversation and reading, to draw her mother's mind away from her loss; to answer the thousand questions of Willie, whose active mind was ever on the go; to attend to the studies of her sister Dora; to strive to make home the pleasantest place for her merry brother Jack; and to forget the worm at the root of her own happiness, were duties neither few nor light for Alice, and *brave* was the spirit required to perform them. Where gained she the *spirit* and the strength? Morning and evening beheld the sweet face of her so lately a happy, thoughtless child, bowed in prayer before her Maker, her small fair hands clasped upon that "best of books," which was her daily study. She had learned that

> "If ever life shall seem
> To thee a toilsome way,
> And gladness cease to beam
> Upon its clouded day;
> If, like the wearied dove,
> O'er shoreless ocean driven,
> Raise thou thine eye above—
> There's rest for thee in Heaven!"

CHAPTER IV.

"What do you think, Ally?" exclaimed Willie, bounding into the parlor one evening, "Jack has got me a place in a lawyer's office! I'm *going* to be a lawyer myself, one of these days, and a famous one I'll make too," frisking about before her, and disclosing as he spoke two rows of shining ivory.

"Indeed! but what are you going to do about school?"

"Oh, I'm going to study at night! Jack's going to teach me, and you, *maybe*," peering roguishly up into her face.

It was an old trick of his, and Alice stooped down and kissed his rosy mouth with a fond smile.

"You are the *very best* sister," exclaimed the boy, "and when I grow up you shall have nothing to do—but sit all day and *every* day—or walk, or ride, and go to as many concerts as you please! Don't tell—but I saw Jack buying tickets at Osborn's as I came along, for the concert to-night—I wonder who he's going to take. I thought *you*, of course, or I would have pulled his nose!"

"Hush, hush, wild Willie!" exclaimed Alice, unable to help smiling at the purposed mode of revenge for neglect of her.

"Oh, yes!" replied the boy, "you never think Jack does wrong! But you don't ask me to whose office I'm going!"

"Well then—whose?"

"Mr. Conrad Etherington's! Jack says you've seen him before; but how you stare; how wild you look!"

"Only see how I have pricked my finger," she replied, assigning that as the cause of her agitation.

"Well, I declare! I never saw you make such a fuss before for a trifle!" said the boy. "Here let me kiss the place to make it well! Isn't Mr. Etherington

DARK JOHN BROWN.

BY EDGAR WAYNE.

CHAPTER I.

It is quite as untrue as it is ungallant to charge that *all* the mischief in this world is done by the women. We dare say that to maintain the opposite of this false though common position, may set some crabbed and disappointed old bachelors to exclaiming pish! and pshaw! But pish! and pshaw! are not arguments.

There are male gossips, as well as female; and the former are more mischievous than the latter, in the proportion of a vulture to a crow. Your woman gossip is usually inclined to content herself with such small pickings up as a bonnet trimmed awry, a ribbon out of fashion, a few details of housekepping neglected, or some such minor trifle. Once in a while, it is true, they do go to the length of mysteriously intimating that somebody is no better than she should be; but as nobody better than reasonably good has recently been discovered, it is difficult to decide how much below par one no better than she should be really stands.

But your male gossip flies at more important quarry. His scandal tells. His blows are levelled at more vital and important points; and as he usually talks, or seems to talk of things of more consequence than the other, he receives more attention, and does more injury. Careless curiosity, and senseless chat, offered as an equivalent for chat desired, make up the staple of the female—while your gentleman tale-bearer has more real malice in his heart, and more poison on his tongue. We mean of course those who talk for a purpose—who have a deliberate intention of malice and envy in their hearts, and who labor to accomplish it. Some men, there are, who talk to hear themselves, of the faults of others.

Perhaps a more nefarious character does not exist than one who deliberately injures the reputation of his neighbors to serve his selfish purposes; and who has no idea of building himself up, that is not coupled with the thought of pulling others down. Dark Brown was such an one. He flourished in a village where the men of his patronymic were so many in number that the expedient had been resorted to of giving them each a soubriquet by way of distinguishing them apart, when spoken of. There were Old Brown and Young Brown, Brown on the Hill, and Meadow Brown, Light Brown and Dark Brown—and the latter, not for any love, but for the purpose of illustration of a not-at-all loveable character we have chosen for our hero.

Dark Brown was married, when our sketch takes him up. To go back to his school days, when he managed to secure the hate of all his mates and companions, would occupy too much of our time, and exhaust the reader's patience. Suffice it to say that he managed effectually to implant the persuasion, in the minds of those who were afterward to be his mates in manhood, that he was a very disagreeable, but a dangerous personage, whom it was necessary to propitiate by seeming friendship, or to avoid crossing at any rate. The latter was hard enough to do; for every other man's good fortune was a cross to him through life; and one needed only to be successful to secure his hatred. He married in such a mode as to ensure to himself a life of suspicion and cold distrust; for he supplanted a rival by artfully villifying him, and his bride took Dark Brown in a fit of resentment against another. She discovered how much she had been imposed upon soon enough to begin hating her husband in very good season; for there is nothing which man or woman cannot more readily forgive than the being made the dupe of a lie. Perhaps his wife was the only person alive who knew him so well as to hate without fearing him; for she felt that in his marriage he had inflicted upon her the worst injury within his power; and having met the worst, she feared nothing further.

Brown was bitterly punished. Sneak as he was, he was not proof against contempt; and the most awful retribution which can, in this world, follow sin, is the knowledge that those who best know the guilty most heartily despise him; and the sense that no course of conduct can remove the true estimate which is thus established. Where even a man's kindness is distrustfully received, as if poison lurked behind his every gift, and where his enmity is taken as a matter of course, and his abuse as something as good as, from its source, could be expected, it is of no use for him to kick against his humiliation, or to try to escape it. It sticks to him like the shirt of Nessus. He may hate all the world the more heartily, the more he is despised, but that does not mend the matter any, but aggravate his sufferings. Even hate loses its zest, when the hater has nobody who can share the sentiment with him; and Dark Brown had withdrawn himself from all companionship with his kind. We mean to say from all real companionship, for there were enough timid souls who had an apparently civil word for him; and he seldom desired to carry a point that it was not conceded, for people feared his enmity. Even this uniform success had at last become a sore, for when one procures civility at such a price it reflects no compliment upon his character, and is anything but balm to his selfishness.

It happened one morning that Brown being nearest the door, answered a knock, and opened it. A boy of some ten or a dozen years, who held a letter in his hand, was the applicant. He asked, "does Mr. Brown live here?" Now as our Brown saw the letter and did not wish to run the risk of getting another man's epistle—his name was John Brown, and their were six other Johns—he asked—

"What Brown?"

And the boy, without thought of harm, and intending to give the most direct and obvious answer, replied—

"Dark Brown."

"No!" growled the other, and slammed the door in the lad's face. This was foolish—exceedingly foolish—but a man in an ill-humor cannot be expected to do wise things. To make the matter even more unpleasant, Brown heard a suppressed titter, even before he turned from the door; and when he looked round he found his whole family in a gale of suppressed merriment at his ill-nature. The children thought it an exceedingly good joke that their father should be angry at a name which even they had learned to consider almost as harmless as if it had been given by his sponsors in baptism, instead of that many headed sponsor, the public. Children as they were, they did not consider that, in the application of distinctive titles, the people, as a celebrated politician once said of their second thoughts, are "seldom wrong, and always efficient."

Brown was forced to grin horribly a ghastly smile in pretence of joining in their merriment. He knew too well how little any other course would avail him—for he had been chafed too many times in some similar method. But he asked, "whose boy was that?"

And the answer did not mend the case at all. It proved to be the child of him who would have been Mrs. Brown's husband, but for the mode in which he was set aside as we have already related. And Mrs. Brown in a tone of insinuating softness, proceeded to pour oil into his wound with exquisite adroitness—but it was the oil of pepper, with a dash of cantharides. She remarked how beautiful and well clad a child it was—how well behaved and exemplary—enlarging particularly upon those traits in which he least resembled her own children, and contriving to make the father of her boys almost loathe his own offspring as she proceeded. And she wound up her eulogy with a most malicious climax, in which she made it appear that the father of the lad was the parent to whom he, and his brothers and sisters owed all their excellent qualities; praising him as a pattern father and husband, above all the men she ever knew—present company *not* excepted. In all this torment so artfully applied, she was careful so to conduct her speech that any exhibition of feeling on the part of her husband would have given an application to the censure by implication, which her praises of his opposite conveyed upon the unhappy Mr. Brown. But he could not wholly conceal his vexation—and she triumphed, and could not wholly conceal her triumph. A delightful domestic scene, was it not?

Life is made up of trifles. The little incident, so apparently unimportant as a child's calling John Brown Dark John to his face, opened anew all the rankling hate of his evil heart, and centred it upon one object—the family of Smiths, whose unlucky junior had so unwittingly pulled the beard of Dark Brown at his own threshold. He worked himself into believing that Smith hated him as devoutly as he hated Smith, and that the accident which we have described was a preconcerted insult. Nothing could be further from the truth: for Smith did not even think of Brown, much less with any enmity. He had long ago forgotten the "cross in love," for he very philosophically reasoned that a woman who could condemn a man capriciously and unheard, would not be likely to make a very affectionate and even tempered wife, let her have who she would to husband. Therefore, when his first vexation was over, he learned to congratulate himself upon his escape, and far from hating Dark John Brown, he pitied him. They had little or no intercourse for obvious reasons.

And now Brown set himself to work, with all his love and capacity for mischief, to discover some method in which he could injure Smith. He did not waste his anger in careless and unguarded speeches, or throw away the artillery of his malice in any way which would serve only to expose the fact of his own enmity, without affecting his victim. By careful and artfully timed inuendoes he injured the credit of the other, and by insidious aspersions, uttered with all the appearance of candor, and of deep regret that he should be obliged to say such things, he managed to throw doubts upon his integrity. Without being able to imagine the cause, Smith in the course of a few months found himself in exceedingly bad odor, and the utmost that he could ascertain of any person's agency in producing this state of the public mind, was that he had repeated what others had said. "They say," that foul ignis fatuus which dances over decaying reputations was never more intangible than in the present instance. Smith had friends—but as he had never been remarkable for good or for ill, he had no very ardent ones, out of his own household. Neither could it be said that (Dark Brown excepted, who kept in the dark) he had any very eager enemies. It was a dead level of indifference that seemed to meet him on every side—a coolness which he could not understand. All his actions seemed suspected, and all his motives misconstrued. A man had much better be stoned to death, than to fall under the ban of village public opinion. In martyrdom there is hope of posthumous justice—in a death of reputation by slander, uncorrected, the utmost victim can hope for is that, if he is not indeed speedily forgotten, the combatants upon the merits of his character will make cudgels of his bones to continue their fight withal.

If the reader thinks that we have drawn a picture too black of Brown's enmity, he must remember that Smith was, at the outset, the injured party; and that a bad man hates no person so intensely as the man whom he is conscious he has once abused. Indeed there is more truth than credit to human nature in the proverb, "he who has injured you never forgives you." Beside all this, Mrs. Brown, who, whether from her natural disposition, or from her unfortunate marriage, was no angel, constantly kept up the mode of irritating her husband, which accident had led her into. It was a glorious vengeance for her, and she was too unscrupulous to care, even if she knew, how much poor Smith suffered in consequence of her chafing her bear of a husband to continual enmity. And to understand why Brown was so successful in his machinations, it need only be explained that he was rich, while Smith was poor.

CHAPTER II.

"The well laid schemes of mice and men," says the poet, "gang aft agley." John Brown fancied, in the pride of his heart—or rather we should say in the pride of his purse, (for the possessor of a heart in his case was not regarded, by those who knew him, as an established fact,) that he was above the danger of want. Pursuing his selfish schemes with a steadiness of covetous grasping which hesitated at no injury to another, spared no falsehoood, spoken or acted, and respected nobody's rights when they stood in the way of his desires, he had become that terrible individual in the country, a rich and unscrupulous man. But there was an unsuspected under current of events at work which was to work his downfall.

Everybody remembers the disastrous financial convulsions, in which those who fancied themselves rich, found their coffers full of paper as valueless as the dead leaves into which the magician's money turned, in the Eastern tale. John Brown, not deficient in financial sagacity, and futhermore egged on to suspicion by his distrust of human nature, was nevertheless a sufferer. Men whose movements are complicated and various as an elaborate machine, may, like that machine, be thrown completely out of gear by the failure of a very small and apparently insignificant portion of their plans. "A screw loose" is death to a manœuvring man, while a frank and straightforward one does not need to care for small accidents.

Brown was surprised to find his bank stock going down—down—down, with an alacrity in sinking which defied calculation. Yet he had a careful and unscrupulous adviser in the city—a partner to some extent, to whom he looked for advices, but none came. He thought that there was something under all this which his comrade knew, and that all must eventually come right and satisfactory. But when, despite his faith in his own sagacity, and that of his associate, he found himself, if the stock reports said true, an absolute beggar, he could live on hope no longer, and hastened to the city. There every face told the same gloomy tale, and before he had consulted, or even seen his agent, he was convinced of the disagreeable fact that he was ruined. He burst upon him in his counting-room with—

"A pretty business you have made of it. We are beggars!"

"*We!*" said the other, coolly, "what do you mean? You may confine your remarks of that sort to yourself, if you please."

"Why, are *you* not in the United States Bank stock as deep as I?"

"I haven't a dollar of it."

"What, did you sell out without telling me—you scoundrel—you——" and Brown was turned black with rage.

"Easy, my friend, easy, or I shall be obliged to knock you down. I am not in the habit of being talked to in precisely such language as you have used."

Brown sank into a seat unasked—the picture of despair. The other pitied him, and so administered consolation by saying—"I told you, according to agreement, what I was going to do, six months ago. I wrote, and you never answered—and I knew you was alive, for you wrote me on another subject, carefully avoiding that. So I thought you had found an angle of your own, and meant to keep me out of it. I wrote by Smith, who was here, to be sure that you got the letter."

Brown groaned aloud. He understood all. "I'll kill Smith—I'll ruin him."

"*That* is done already; and I suspect you know more about it than I do."

"Thank Heaven for *so* much," said Brown, at length.

"You are in a humor to be devout to-day," said the other sarcastically. "Perhaps you rejoice that Dowlas, Dimity & Co. are gone. They stopped to-day."

"What! I've got——" but habitual caution stopped him. He did not think it safe to tell all his losses.

"I know it," said the other, with a malicious smile. "Will you take five per cent for what you have of their paper?"

Brown made no answer.

"What," said the other, pursuing his relentless questionings, "will you take for what you have on hand of Brown, Burlap & Co?"

"Dollar for dollar. It is payable to-day."

"Payable, but not *receivable*, my dear sir. "Dowlas & Dimity carry them down too."

Brown could sit there no longer. He rushed out into the air. His investigations, pursued in no very enviable mood, but with forced composure, revealed the agreeable fact that Brown & Burlap *did* fail from the stoppage of Dowlas & Dimity. In the counting-house of the latter were assignees, sitting like a coroner's inquest. He arrived in season to hear Dimity, the younger partner, say—"if this had only come yesterday, instead of to-day, we need not have stopped."

"You need not have stopped *to-day*, perhaps," said one of the assignees, very calmly, "but you could not have run beyond next week. It is just as well so, my dear sir, depend upon it."

Poor Brown, who had eagerly listened to all this, groaned again. For once, he was really sorry for anothers misfortune—because it involved his own. If Dowlas & Dimity had run a week longer, the notes in Brown's possession, which were within a day of maturity, would have been paid, and not only so, but those of Brown, Burlap & Co. would have been saved too. So to Dark Brown the thing was *not* "just as well as it was." One day more of grace would have secured him his venture—one week more the whole. "What is it," said he, "which came just a day too late?"

"Oh, some country merchants money," said the assignee, tossing him the letter. "He is an honorable fellow, if he was compelled to let his note lie over. I have a little of his paper, and intend to offer him an extension. But you seem to know him?"

Brown's under jaw had fallen, as he held the paper in his trembling hands. It was Smith's remittance—Smith's whom he had prevented from getting a discount at the village bank! He had rejoiced the night before in the belief that he had ruined him, and now Smith was safe, respected and solvent, and he, Brown, had fallen in the pit which he had digged for another.

Dark John Brown hurried back to his home in the country. His wife smiled, but not openly, as she saw the cloud on his face. He threw down his hat, and said to his son—

"Go tell Smith's boy to come over here."

"Ask him, with your father's compliments, if his parents are willing," insinuated Mrs. Brown, blandly. The son soon returned:

"Mr. Smith says if you wish to see any of his family they are all at home."

Brown looked at his riding whip—and then he thought better of it. He went over to his neighbor's house, and found the family just sitting down to tea. The formality of an invitation was passed, and, of course, declined. The family waited for the unusual visitor to open his business

"I suppose," said Brown, "that you are aware that your son is liable to be sent to the Penitentiary?"

Mrs. Smith uttered an involuntary scream, and the frightened boy retreated behind her.

"Indeed I am not," said Smith, astonished, but with calmness. "What is the matter, sir? You are very much discomposed."

"The young scoundrel has stolen a letter, that's what. And he shall go to Cherry Hill, if there's any justice in the land."

"Perhaps you allude to one which I brought from Philadelphia, and sent over to your house?"

"I don't know anything about *that*. I know and can prove that the letter was given to you, and I never received it. I shall hold you to answer."

"It was my son just now," said Smith, "that you intended to hold."

Brown had crossed his own path. "At any rate," he said, "it was stolen between you. It makes no difference to me whether father or son, or both are hanged."

"Mr. Brown," said Smith, "for some reason or other you have shown me, as I have just learned, the deepest malice. But I have no disposition to bandy words with you. I brought up a letter from town, and sent it to your house. You slammed the door in my boy's face, for a very childish blunder of his, which I regretted at the time, I confess, more than I do now, for you have shown yourself unworthy of any consideration. Thus treated, he pushed it under the door. There is the simple story, as far as we are concerned, and I dare say you had the letter long ago, if the truth could be ascertained."

"Yes," said the lad, plucking up courage, "and I pushed it clear under, with a stick."

"Stuff!" growled Brown.

"I can show you," said the boy, "just where I poked it."

"Oh, nonsense," said Brown, moodily. Nevertheless, as people in a quandary do what seem very senseless things, Mr. Brown, Mr. Smith, and the little Smiths all walked across the road to see where little Josey pushed the letter. And he, full of consequence, picked up another stick, and pushed it under the door to show just how he did it. And Brown would have kicked him as he stooped, only that his father stood by, and was the stronger man of the two. So he satisfied himself with pushing the lad aside, and opened the door, intending to walk in, and shut the others out.

But Smith's eye caught something, which induced him to put up his hand, and stop the door from closing. The stick had run under the edge of the oil-cloth upon the floor, and remained there. Smith jerked up the cloth, with a sudden thought—and there lay, grimmed with dust, stained with floor washings, and flattened by the steps of out-goers and in-comers, but still entire enough to preserve its identity, the very letter, the non-receipt of which had ruined Dark John Brown.

It was wonderful, how the tide turned. Brown moved out of town—a wiser, and we hope a better man. The whole of his course toward poor Smith was discussed, and as the persecuted Smith had now a point to start from, he vindicated himself from all the "*they say*," and soon stood fairer than ever before. Indeed, he had little need to speak in his own defence, for the circumstances became so public, and the character of Brown was, now that he was reduced, so notorious, that Smith found people predisposed in his favor, on all hands. Everybody remembered that they had always known that Dark Brown was a bad fellow; and many were sure now, that they had always defended Mr. Smith, when he was evil spoken of. As to Mrs. Brown she had the sense to perceive that she had been a very foolish. as well as a wicked woman; and as Brown, despite his lamentations, is not *quite* a beggar, he fares a great deal better than he deserves, with a wife whose penitence for past folly leads her to kindness which affection never did.

Our little tale is told. We trust that we have shown how a man may do mischief with his tongue, as well as a woman. But there is a better moral. As we have quoted one proverb, let us take another—a lesson to all the ill-disposed, and all evil speakers of both sexes: "curses, like chickens, come home to roost." Such, certainly, was the experience of Dark John Brown.

THE DRESS-MAKER'S APPRENTICE;

OR, THE BACHELOR ABROAD AND AT HOME.

BY CAROLINE ORNE.

CHAPTER I.

"CAN you tell me the name of that beautiful girl who has just been dancing with Frank Ashton?" said Robert Lanson, to a gentleman by the name of Sutherland, who stood next him at one of the most brilliant parties there had been for the season.

"Her name is Edith Eldon," replied Sutherland, "and she is an heiress as well as a beauty."

"She is really the prettiest girl I ever saw," said Lanson, "and I must obtain an introduction to her," and as he finished speaking, he left Sutherland in order to execute his intention.

Sutherland followed him with his eyes, and unconsciously murmured a few words to himself, while a scornful smile wreathed his lips. To one not thoroughly acquainted with Lanson, the reason of this would have been difficult to determine; for few gentlemen were more liberally endowed with personal attractions than Lanson. Besides, though not over six and twenty, he had, by his talents and industry, secured an extensive and lucrative practice as a lawyer. He had, moreover, recently come into possession of a very handsome estate.

Lanson obtained the introduction he sought, and set himself seriously to work to win the fascinating heiress. She did not seem insensible to his assiduous attention, for her color would sometimes deepen when he suddenly entered her presence; and her eyes often veiled themselves beneath their long, thick lashes when he addressed her.

One lovely evening there was a large party at Mrs. Sumner's. The air of the crowded rooms had become warm and oppressive, and Edith stepped into a balcony, so filled with tall, flowering plants as to entirely screen her from view. She wished to commune with her own heart, for she was not unconscious that she was becoming deeply interested in Lanson. She soon became aware that there were persons conversing together near the door of the balcony, though she was too much engrossed with her own thoughts to mind what was said, till at length the name of Lanson fell on her ear. This had the effect at once to arrest her attention.

"Can that be true?" were the next words which Edith heard.

"I have but too good reason to believe that it is," replied a voice which she knew to be Sutherland's.

"Lanson is the last person," said his companion, "whom I should have thought guilty of so much meanness. I always imagined that he was one of the most generous and noble-hearted fellows in existence."

"One whose heart-worship has, like his, always been lavished upon mammon and his own dear self, can neither be generous nor noble-hearted. If he assume the semblance of either, it must be from interested motives. His sister, who from being the eldest of a large family, while he is the youngest, is quite old enough to be his mother, keeps his house, and performs as much labor as two servants ought to, and, what is worse, is treated by him as a mere underling."

"Why does she submit to be treated thus?"

"He gives her a home, which I suppose she thinks is better than to be cast upon the world at her time of life, for she is entirely destitute of property. Besides, I have heard it suggested that she really imagines herself inferior to him, and, therefore, submits to his caprices and exactions with the greatest possible meekness, and does not even seem to know that she has any cause of complaint."

"And can Miss Eldon know anything of this?"

"I suspect not," replied Sutherland.

"Would it not be right to give her a hint of it?"

"All things considered, I should say no. Interference in such cases usually produces an effect opposite to what was intended. It will undoubtedly be the more judicious way to let things take their own course."

It was impossible for Edith not to overhear this conversation, and the unamiable light in which it placed Lanson, gave her more pain than fifteen minutes before she could have willingly imagined. As she knew on what slight grounds reports disadvantageous to a person's character are frequently based, she at once came to a determination to satisfy herself as to the validity of the charges against Lanson, to which she had just been an involuntary listener. As soon as Sutherland and his companion had withdrawn from its vicinity, she took the first opportunity to leave the balcony. She soon afterward met Lanson, who was evidently seeking her. His manner toward her, from the first, had been marked with the greatest delicacy, a trait which cannot fail to be flattering to a lady's self-complacency, implying as it does the existence of qualities which are the greatest ornaments to the female character. He ventured, once or twice, a step further this evening than he had ever done before, by addressing her in terms somewhat complimentary, yet always in a manner so as not to exceed the limits of good taste. If she had not overheard the conversation between Sutherland and his companion, he might have made the impression he intended: as it was, she was so much pre-occupied by a plan already floating in her mind in a chrysalis state, that, although his

words fell on her ear, she imperfectly comprehended their meaning. Lanson was disappointed, for he had carefully marked the different phases which her feelings had appeared to assume with regard to himself since his first introduction to her, and he imagined that she was fully prepared to listen with some degree of interest, to what, to do him justice, were no idle compliments, but the real sentiments of his heart. Want of perseverance, however, as has been suggested, was not one of his faults, and suspecting that she affected an indifference which she did not feel, he did not suffer his courage to be in the least damped.

CHAPTER II.

"If you have not already come to a satisfactory conclusion respecting Lanson," said Mary Arnott, Edith's cousin, "I advise you to make all possible haste, as I am certain that he has made up his mind to pop the question."

Edith sat silent a short time, and appeared uncommonly thoughtful. She at length said—

"I wish you to tell me truly, Mary, if you have ever heard anything to Lanson's disadvantage?"

"Never. On the contrary, all whom I have heard speak of him, represent him as being a young man of correct habits, and as uncommonly attentive to his business, although the property which has lately fallen to him yields so large an income that he might, if he chose, give up business altogether."

"A circumstance which may go to corroborate what I have heard," said Edith, and she then mentioned the remarks which she had heard Sutherland make respecting him.

"Mr. Sutherland has certainly been misinformed," said Mary, "and I should not suffer his remarks to influence me in the least."

"That is impossible," replied Edith. "Unless I can be perfectly sure that they were without foundation, Robert Lanson can never be anything more to me than he is now."

"The difficulty lies in making yourself sure," said Mary. "Mr. Hearsay, who is not the most veracious personage in the world, being the only one from whom you can gather any information."

"I have been thinking of a plan," said Edith. "It flashed upon my mind while listening to Sutherland's remarks."

"It is a romantic one, I hope," said Mary, "and if so, you must let me be an aider and abetter, because you know that a little romance, once in a while, is the delight of my heart."

"Without doubt, I shall be glad of your assistance," said Edith.

"What is it then? I am so impatient to hear," replied Mary.

"You know that I told you one day, not long since, that I had thoughts of learning a dress-maker's trade."

"Yes, but I did not suppose you were in earnest."

"I was, however, for although there is certainly no prospect at present that I shall be obliged to earn my living, as strange things as that have come to pass. Besides there is a monotony in fashionable life which tires me. I wish to see the world under some different aspect. Now, wherever I go, I am greeted with smiles because I am Miss Eldon, the wealthy heiress. Miss Eldon, the dress-maker's apprentice, may have opportunity to see people as they really are."

"That may be true, but how by learning a dress-maker's trade you can accomplish the other object you have in view, I am at a loss to imagine."

"Miss Hilton, you know, is one of the most fashionable dress-maker's in the city, and her shop is within five minutes walk of Lanson's residence. Now that pretty, modest girl, by the name of Susan Rowe, who fitted a morning dress for me last week, told me that while she was learning her trade of Miss Hilton, she had a room in Lanson's house, and that her meals, prepared in the nicest manner, were always sent up to her by Miss Lanson, as her brother did not wish to have a third person at the table. Now if I can have the good fortune to be Susan Rowe's successor, it will be all that is necessary to accomplish my object."

"You will, of course, be obliged to make a confidant of Miss Hilton, for without doubt she knows you by sight."

"I believe not, yet even if she does there will be no necessity of taking her into my confidence, as I mean to cover this light colored hair of mine with tresses made into a fashionable wig, dark as the story-tellers say, as the raven's plume."

"But even if you wear a black wig, it will not change your appearance in other respects. Your name too, she has doubtless heard of the celebrated Miss Eldon, if she never saw her."

"Perhaps not, and even if she has, she has plenty to attend to without trying to find out if we are related to each other. She might be anxious to discover the origin of a new fashion, but she won't trouble herself to trace that of an apprentice girl."

"You may be recognized by other people if not by her."

"Not at all. When they see me pass they will say, 'how much Miss Hilton's little apprentice girl looks like Miss Eldon—if I didn't know that it was impossible, I should think it was her'—and then they will think no more about me."

"And you feel as if you would be doing perfectly right to constitute yourself a spy upon poor Lanson in his own *menage*, where it cannot be expected that he will speak and act by rule."

"Certainly I do. Stratagem in love as in war, should never be held dishonorable."

CHAPTER III.

The house of Lanson, a large and somewhat stately looking dwelling, was in a retired and pleasant street. Besides himself and sister, who, as has been mentioned, was his housekeeper, there was only one inhabitant, a girl of fourteen, who scoured knives, washed dishes, cleaned boots and shoes, did errands and whatever else she was capable of doing. Miss Lanson's life was, therefore, a very lonely one, and she used sometimes to think after Susan Rowe went away, that she would give a good deal to have some person to speak to occasionally. She felt this want

the more as her brother, who had, as he said, talking enough to do in the regular transaction of his business, was, when at home, uncommonly taciturn, seldom speaking except to give some directions relative to the manner he wished his dinner cooked, or some other matter which bore directly on his personal comfort. One morning when a sense of loneliness pressed more heavily than usual on Miss Lanson's mind, her attention was arrested by the ringing of the street door bell. It was seldom rung by any one but her brother, and as she was wondering why he had returned so soon after breakfast, Hannah, the girl before alluded to, put her head into the room and said that there was a lady at the door who wished to speak with her.

"Wait on her into the parlor," said Miss Lanson, "and I will be there in a few minutes."

When Miss Lanson entered the parlor, she found a young girl whose dress was plain and simple, yet exactly fitted to her form, which was remarkably fine. Without any preamble she made known the motive of her call.

"I am going," said she, "to learn a dress-maker's trade of Miss Hilton, and having heard that you lodged and boarded one of her girls last summer, I have called to see if you would accommodate me in the same way."

"For my own part I should be very glad to," replied Miss Lanson, "for, as the house is large, it would make it seem less lonely; but what my brother will think about it I cannot tell."

"If he should be willing," said the young girl, "I shall consider it as a favor, as I know of no house where I can obtain accommodations such as I should like, which is not too distant from the shop. If convenient I should prefer to have my meals in my own room."

"It will be perfectly convenient," said Miss Lanson. "Even if it did put me to a little extra trouble I should not value it, for the sake of having one more human being live and breathe under the same roof."

"If it should cause you any additional trouble," said the girl, "I shall be willing to satisfy you for it."

"I will speak to my brother about it," said Miss Lanson, "when he comes home to dinner."

"And I will call again in the morning to ascertain the result. My name is Eldon, and if you wish to make any inquiries respecting me, I can refer you to several respectable persons who reside in a neighboring town."

When Lanson came home to dinner, his sister's first care was to study his countenance, that she might "fashion her demeanor by his looks." She imagined that he appeared in better humor than usual, and she felt sure that he was, when he voluntarily informed her that he had recently several times met with a lady with whom he was so much pleased, that he had serious thoughts of marrying her.

"She is of course very handsome and very accomplished, or you would not think of such a thing."

"She is in every respect superior to any lady I have ever met with. The last time I saw her I thought she seemed more distant and reserved than usual; but I suspect her object was to increase my ardor, by making me doubtful as to my success."

"As it will probably be several months before you are married," said his sister, hesitating, after awhile, "I thought I should like, that is if you are perfectly willing, for I am sure I shouldn't think of such a thing if you are not, to have a young lady who called here this morning board here a short time."

"Another dress-maker's apprentice, I suppose."

"Yes, but she says she shall be willing to pay for any extra trouble she may give."

"I cannot say that I feel much flattered at the idea of having a person of her class as a boarder, yet if she is willing to give five dollars a week, as we have several rooms which are entirely useless to us, I will not object to her coming, provided she on all occasions takes her meals in her room."

"That is a condition she seemed particularly anxious about, though she has a face, if she is nothing but a dress-maker's apprentice, which for my part I should like to see at the table."

"What kind of a face has she?"

"I don't know that I can give you a correct idea of it, for I am not good at description—but I know that she has a very handsome nose, beautiful red lips, and the brightest blue eyes I ever saw. They made me think of the deep, clear spring I used to love when I was a child. I often amused myself by looking into it, but I could never see to the bottom of the sunshine that was poured into it from overhead—that was always unfathomable."

"What colored hair has she?" said Lanson, the description which his sister gave of her making him think of Edith.

"Black, and it struck me that her skin was a little darkish for a person with blue eyes."

"Dark skinned ladies are not to my taste," said Lanson, as he left the room.

CHAPTER IV.

Edith did not fail to call on Miss Lanson the following morning according to promise. She immediately closed with Miss Lanson's offer to board her for five dollars a week, somewhat to that lady's surprise, who had felt afraid that a person in her station would think it more than she could afford.

"Won't you look at the rooms, and select the one you think will suit you best?" said Miss Lanson, wondering as she spoke why she should appear so indifferent about it.

"It will be as well," replied Edith, and she followed Miss Lanson up stairs, who showed her three rooms, all of which were large and airy, though very scantily furnished.

Edith selected the only one which had a carpet on the floor; and Miss Lanson said she would do her best to supply the other deficiences with articles of furniture belonging to the other chambers.

"I forgot to mention," said Edith, "that I shall always spend Sunday with a friend who lives in a distant part of the city. I shall always go in season to take tea with her Saturday, and shall not return here till dinner-time on Monday."

"Then there ought to be some reduction in the price," said Miss Lanson.

"By no means. I am perfectly willingly to give five dollars a week, even if I am absent one, or even two days each week, which may frequently happen to be the case."

Edith now rose to go, saying that she should be back in season for dinner.

"Don't be *too* early," said Miss Lanson, "for I cannot send your dinner up to you till after my brother has dined, as he is particular to have the first choice of whatever may be put upon the table. There is always enough left, however, which is very good, and I shall be careful to select the best for you."

"I am not difficult," said Edith, "and I beg that you will give yourself no unnecessary trouble on my account."

"I shall not consider it any trouble," said Miss Lanson, "but rather a pleasure to see that your meals are of good quality and properly served."

Edith now bid her good morning, and after giving directions to a porter to go for her baggage and convey it to her new lodging, she proceeded to the shop where she was to take her first lesson in the art of dress-making.

Everything went on quite smoothly for more than a week. Edith had been absent one night, for the purpose of attending a party, where she as usual met Lanson. Miss Lanson, when she found that she was preparing to go, very much regretted her intended absence, and tried to persuade her to remain at home, as she said her brother was going to one of the grand parties he was in the habit of attending, where he expected to see a lady he was so much pleased with that she shouldn't wonder if he married her, she should, therefore, be quite alone till a late hour. Edith excused herself by saying that she had promised her friend to spend the night with her.

"I wish you could see our boarder," said Miss Lanson, one morning to her brother. "If you should, you would say that you never saw a person that was really beautiful before; and if there was ever a lady in the world she is one. And then she is so gay and so lively, and sometimes so funny that——"

"That," said her brother, taking up the word, "you are so amused that you neglect many things which you ought to attend to. Now I should much rather see my boots and shoes properly blacked than forty pretty milliners, and it appears to me that if you should attend to it as you ought, that Hannah could be made to do them so that they would look a little more decent."

"I am sure I am sorry that I didn't mind that she did them so badly—I will do them myself for the future," meekly replied his sister.

"I should be very glad if you would," said he, "and I wish you would also be a little more particular about ironing my shirt bosoms and collars—I don't think you take much pains with them."

"I will do my best," said she, "and I always have done. Miss Eldon saw me ironing some yesterday, and said she never saw any look nicer."

"Then Miss Eldon's ideas of niceness differ from mine," he replied. "It would not be amiss either if you should trust more to yourself and less to Hannah in preparing dinner. I have not been remarkably well pleased of late, but have foreborne to say any thing, thinking that perhaps matters might be mended. The dress-maker's lively and funny apprentice I suppose though must be attended to whether I am or not."

"Indeed, Robert," said Miss Lanson, "I never trust Hannah to prepare dinner or any other meal. It was not my fault that those chickens were not good yesterday. I knew the moment I saw them that they would not be good roasted, and had not your orders respecting the manner you wished to have them cooked been peremptory, I should have done them some other way."

"Well, all I have to say is, that if you have any judgment, I wish you would have the goodness to exercise it for the future. I shall send some green peas home for dinner to-day—only a very few, as they as yet sell at a very high price, so you needn't think of sending any up to your boarder. The remainder of those strawberries I purchased yesterday will do for the dessert."

"There is not a single strawberry left."

"Not a single one left?"

"No," replied his sister, looking a good deal frightened.

"You gave them to your boarder, I suppose; but remember if she wishes for any fruit she will for the future supply herself."

"I thought as she is absent a good deal, we could afford to let her have a little of what is left."

"You for *once* happened to think wrong then, and I will thank you to remember that I strictly prohibit you from offering her any more. Another thing I have minded too, and that is, the piece of ice on the butter is much larger than there is any need of. All that is left is of course wasted."

"It is almost always about all melted by the time Miss Eldon finishes her dinner."

"Eldon did you say? I thought your boarder's name was Alden."

"No, her name is Eldon."

"Rather a singular coincidence," said he. "I did not think that there was another person in town by that name. Where is Hannah? Let her go and get my other hat—this is too heavy for this warm morning."

"Hannah is gone of an errand," she replied, "I will go for your hat myself."

"Why didn't you bring the gloves you saw lying on the table when you were about it?" said he, when she returned.

"I didn't know that you wished for them," she replied. "I will go back and get them."

"I wish you would," said he, and his sister, unconscious of fatigue from the stimulus afforded by fear joined with a desire to please, again ascended the stairs in order to procure his gloves.

Lanson took them and left the house.

Edith, the evening previous, had taken a piece of work home with her to finish, so that instead of going to the shop as usual, directly after breakfast, she had remained in her room. What little air there was, was not in a direction to come in at the windows, and as

the morning was oppressively warm, she had in order to make herself comfortable, been obliged to leave open her chamber door. It might have been proper for her to have closed it when Lanson commenced finding fault with his sister: she did not, however, and consequently heard all that was said. Soon after his departure, having finished her sewing, she prepared to go to the shop.

"Miss Eldon, do step this way one minute," said Miss Lanson, who heard her passing through the hall.

Edith entered a small, back apartment, where her hostess with a sad, care-worn countenance stood by a table, on which were lying a number of very fine linen shirts.

"Do, Miss Eldon," said she, "if you possibly can, tell me what I can do to make these look better. My brother feels dissatisfied with them, and says they are not starched and ironed as they ought to be."

"I cannot tell you what to do," said Miss Eldon, "for they are already as nice as it is in the power of human hands to make them. Had I a brother so hard to please as yours is, I should give up the attempt in despair."

"Robert seems more difficult about his things than he used to," said Miss Lanson. "The truth is, he is anxious to appear uncommonly well, on account of the lady I mentioned to you a few days ago that he has in his eye."

"Could the truth be known," said Edith, "I dare say that the lady in question would value a smooth temper much more highly than a smooth dickey. Ah, here are a pair of boots—the ones, I suppose, that you are to have the privilege of blacking for him. You have so many things to attend to, and look so worried and fatigued, let me see if I cannot succeed."

"Oh! not for the world."

"And why not? I am always pretty sure to succeed in whatever I undertake, and I have no doubt but that I can black Mr. Lanson's boots in a manner which will prove entirely satisfactory to him. Just lend me this apron, and I will polish them so well that no person will suspect they were not done by a regular shoe-black."

Heedless of Miss Lanson's remonstrances, she commenced blacking the boots, and did not leave them till she could see her face in them.

"There," said she, placing them in a conspicuous place, and assuming an air of mock triumph, "I knew that I could do them as well as if I had done nothing but black shoes all my life time. I think that even the lady you mentioned, who it seems is the innocent cause of his fastidiousness in shirt-bosoms and boots, should she chance to see them will give him credit for employing as pains-taking a shoe-black as there is in the city."

"What would my brother think if he should know that you did them?"

"He would probably think that a dress-maker's apprentice ought not to feel degraded by performing such a little menial office for the handsome, accomplished and *amiable* Mr. Lanson, especially when it would otherwise have devolved on his sister."

"He don't in a general way expect me to do them," said Miss Lanson. "Hannah can almost always suit him, but he sometimes has a good deal to perplex him relative to his business, and is always obliged to treat his clients with courtesy, let them be tedious and troublesome as they will, or he will lose their custom, so it is not to be wondered at if he is a little out of humor when he comes home."

"By no means," replied Edith. "I have heard of many persons whose ill-humor by dint of careful nursing, often rises to so high a pitch that there might be a dangerous explosion were they not able to let it off at home occasionally. Mr. Lanson seems obliged on account of a paucity of servants to select his sister as a safety valve, who will doubtless be succeeded by his wife whenever he obtains one."

"Oh! no," said Miss Lanson, "for he has always been so used to finding fault with me that it will seem a great deal more natural to him than to find fault with his wife. I have no doubt but that he will be very indulgent to his wife, especially if he is so fortunate as to obtain the lady he is so much pleased with."

"How happens it?" said Edith, as she poured a little cologne water upon her hands, after having subjected them to a more thorough ablution than usual, even though they had been encased in a pair of thick gloves while performing what was to them a very novel employment—"how happens it that you have never seen the lady you speak of? Don't you ever attend any parties?"

"No, indeed, Robert says my manners are too much out of date for me to mix in fashionable society. I received a few invitations when I first presided over his establishment, but there is a general understanding now that I never go out, so people have ceased to invite me."

"I shall be absent again to-night," said Edith, as she put on her bonnet.

"How strange that you should always be absent the same evenings that my brother is. He is going to a party this evening, I can tell by his appearance."

And Miss Lanson was right. Her brother did attend a party, and so did Edith. Lanson thought he had never seen her look and appear so well, but she received his attentions with a coldness which he could not possibly misconstrue, for that which is sometimes assumed as a mask to cover the real feelings of the heart. He could have borne this with a better grace had she treated all with similar indifference. It was impossible, however, for him not to perceive that Frank Ashton, the gentleman who had paid her particular attention the first evening he ever saw her, and who had since modestly kept somewhat in the back-ground, had more than regained his original place in her favor. To be supplanted by Frank Ashton was in his estimation too humiliating, for though he was well educated and possessed talents of the highest order, he was poor. Neither could he, thought Lanson, compare with himself in personal advantages. In this he was right as respected those which generally pass for such in the eyes of the multitude; but persons who prefer an intellectual expression of countenance to a brilliant complexion, and some other advantages of a showy nature, would have been better pleased with the looks of Ashton.

That which added to Lanson's chagrin was, he had within a few days purchased a high priced piano, which was that very moment standing in silent dignity in one of the parlors, with Miss Eldon's favorite songs and airs reposing on the top of it. He began now seriously to apprehend that the roll of bank-bills he paid the manufacturer of the instrument, would have been more judiciously employed in purchasing stock.

CHAPTER V.

"It is a delightful morning," said Edith to Miss Lanson, "and if I were you I would walk out, if it were for nothing but the novelty of breathing a little air, which has not first been enclosed within four walls."

"I would," replied Miss Lanson, "if Hannah had not gone to make her sister a visit to-day."

"If that is the only thing that prevents you," said Edith, "I will take Hannah's place—I can easily apologize to Miss Hilton for being absent from the shop."

After some hesitation, Miss Lanson concluded to go.

"You will be in no danger of being disturbed," said she, when she was ready for her walk, "for except the boy my brother sometimes sends with the meat and vegetables for dinner, no person enters the house half a dozen times a year that does not belong to the family."

"I shall enjoy myself very well, I dare say," said Edith, "so don't be in a hurry to return."

"I should like to call on Miss Hinckley," said Miss Lanson, "if she did not live so far from here. She is all the friend I have in the city. We used to be school-girls together, and we have grown old and out of date together; but then, you know, it isn't natural for us to seem out of date to each other."

"Why don't she call on you?" inquired Edith.

"Her health is delicate, so that she is not able to walk the mile which separates us, and she can seldom afford to pay for a seat in an omnibus."

"Make her a good, long visit now," said Edith, "and talk over everything that has happened since you last met."

"I *can* spend an hour with her," said Miss Lanson, looking at the time-piece, "and then be back in season to prepare dinner," and as she spoke, her countenance brightened up with quite a holiday look.

"I cannot imagine what makes Miss Lanson think you are so handsome in this horrid black wig," said Edith, looking into the glass and addressing the light, sylph-like figure which it reflected. As she spoke, she playfully entwined her fingers with the curling locks and cast it upon the floor. "Worse still," she continued—"such sunny hair and such a dingy skin," and running into the kitchen and pouring some water into a basin, her nut-brown complexion soon took the hue of a snow-wreath bathed in the beams of a rosy twilight.

She returned to the parlor and amused herself by looking at the music lying on the piano.

"Oh! here is the song I love above all others," said she, "I have half a mind to sing it—besides I do so want to know if Lanson was cheated in this piano."

The next minute she was seated before it with her fingers lightly running over its keys.

"It is certainly a very tolerable instrument," thought she, as she finished the song and turned to another.

She then went on playing and singing till she began to think that it was nearly time for Miss Lanson to return. She gave a glance at the time-piece and concluded that she might venture on one song more. She was in the midst of the second stanzas when Lanson, who had returned home to procure some papers which he needed, ascended the front door-steps and was about to pull the bell, when the sound of music caused him to hesitate. He imagined that his sister had invited some person who had called on her to play upon the piano, a liberty which he felt disposed to highly resent, and one he was quite sure she would not presume to repeat. He suspected there would be a slipping out at side-doors the moment he rung the bell, but finding that he fortunately had his latch-key in his pocket, he admitted himself without noise and stole softly into the room containing the piano. He had proceeded only a few steps when he stumbled over something which he took to be the cat, but which on looking down proved to be a lady's wig. The noise thus produced, though slight, as it happened during a momentary pause in the music, reached the ear of Edith. She turned her head, and when she saw who it was quickly rose from her seat.

"Do I see Miss Eldon?" said Lanson.

"Yes, my name is Eldon, and I board with Miss Lanson."

"I am unable to comprehend what the meaning of this can be," said he.

"One very plain meaning is," she replied, "I wished to learn the dress-maker's trade of Miss Hilton, and there was no other place where I could board that was within a convenient distance."

"Can I then have been deceived? I thought, and others thought with me that you were the heiress of half a million."

"You have not been deceived in that respect," said Edith, "but as every person is liable to a reverse of fortune, I some time since came to a determination to prepare myself to meet any reverse that might happen to me."

"This is one meaning, you say—may I presume to inquire the others."

"Certainly. You must know without my confessing it that I was not—to say the least—displeased with your appearance. I, however, by a circumstance which is not worth repeating, was led to suspect that there was a false and a real side to your character—a rough and smooth side to your temper. Now as the noble, or rather apparently noble side of your character, and the smooth side of your temper were always presented when you were abroad, I naturally concluded that the mean side of the one, and the rough side of the other were kept for home use. I wished to prove the truth of my suspicions, and I have."

"Espionage is *not* mean, I suppose."

"I have been guilty of none," she replied. "The knowledge I have obtained will be converted to my

own benefit—I shall not report it for the benefit of others. Good morning, sir," and curtseying, she retired to her own room.

"Poor Lanson!" she thought, as she turned the key of her door, "you have been tested by a rather severe ordeal—there are few I suspect who would pass it without a slight singe, yet while I pity you I have much reason to congratulate myself, for so infatuated had I become that nothing short of hearing and seeing could satisfy me that you were not as estimable as you appeared. The fury of the storm will, I am afraid, burst upon his sister, but I will find a way, and that soon, to indemnify her for all that she has so meekly suffered."

And she did indemnify her. In less than a week afterward Miss Lanson received a letter, informing her that ten thousand dollars, not transferable during her life-time, had been placed at her disposal. Lanson's reasons were too good for not wishing to identify Miss Eldon the heiress as Miss Eldon the dress-maker's apprentice, to permit him to gratify his revenge by disclosing what he did not fail, when no person was within ear-shot, to call mean, unlady-like and bold.

In three months afterward he was married to a rich widow, ten years older than himself, who did not hesitate to tell him that it would be more agreeable to her for his sister to find a home elsewhere. Fortunately Miss Lanson thought that she should prefer to go, and within a few days after her brother's marriage she was comfortably settled with her old friend, Miss Hinckley, the handsome sum given her by Edith being ample for the maintenance of them both, in as much comfort as they desired at the small and neat establishment owned by Miss Hinckley.

Among the ladies who attracted the most attention at one of the fashionable watering-places, the next season, were Mrs. Ashton and Mrs. Gilmore, formerly Edith Eldon, and Mary Arnott. Miss Lanson and Miss Hinckley were present at Edith's bridal party, and the young bride's eyes never rested on the happy and tranquil countenance of the former without a thrill of pleasure visiting her heart. Removed from the chilling and depressing atmosphere which surrounded her when her home was with her brother, Miss Lanson did not feel herself to be out of date, nor was she considered so by others.

EDWIN GRAY.

BY G. V. MAXHAM.

CHAPTER I.

Yon mansion teems with legends for the heart,
Her lingering footsteps stays
Upon that threshold stone.
* * * * She whose hand had made
That spot so beautiful with woven shade
And aromatic shrubs and flowers.—L. H. SIGOURNEY.

ELVERTON HOMESTEAD.

THERE, away through the brown twilight it stands, calm and beautiful. It still looks as in the days of yore, when oft upon its sunny threshold sat the gay-hearted young girl, Ida Elverton, with Edwin Gray, the playmate of her happy youth. How often they came out on the old porch to look up at the evening sky and read their mingled destinies in each deep and silent star, which, in their fancies, they deemed to be the golden symbols of that talismanic language which the angels of their youth had written upon the sibylline page of the Heavens. Oh, it would have done your soul good, if you could but have overheard their childish talk, as they sat there upon that threshold stone, weaving the woof of coming destiny, in bright golden thread, dyed by the gorgeous fancy of fervid youth. But the grim wizard Time, who with an iron pen is writing down continually the sad, strange history of each human heart, has since recorded a far different tale from that which they were wont to read upon the star-checkered page of God's broad and silent sky. There is a strange, thrilling charm lingering about each silent star, as it comes out upon the wall of Heaven, and bares its burning breast to mortal gaze. Like a talisman, it summons from the sepulchre of the buried past, all blessed memories, pressed therein like flowers within a book. Like a torch-lamp, it swings within the dim door of our forgetfulness, recalling to the dull solitude of the present, the forms of beloved ones, whose music tones in other days were wont to mingle in our hearts worship around the hearth-stone of the affections. Like the gushing poetry of eloquence it fills the heart with dreams of inspiration—with high and noble impulses, giving it a strange longing for a brighter and more glorious sphere than that which is within these walls of earth. I too, in my youthful fancy, once did deem the golden stars to be a band of angels, wandering in the flowery fields of Paradise, and my young heart leaped to go and rove with them.

And there at the right of the old house, do you not see that orchard stretching far away through the evening mist, like a pleasant memory through the heart of sorrow? That old orchard teems with associations such as even now doth warm the chilled heart's blood, sending the ruddy flush of youth to this withered brow of mine. As I recall those glorious old recollections—those golden types of a happy boyhood, I am once more the truant, stealing away from my parents sight, to sport in the deep, cool shade of those rough old trees. Oh, how often in the May-day of my youth have I sported beneath those broad, sheltering branches. How often behind each high old trunk have I played the guileless game of hide and seek; and oh! how often there have I heard the ringing laugh of girlhood, of Ida Elverton, the fairy genius of that sylvan play-ground, quivering upon the blue air and through this heart like the pleasant carol of a singing bird, or:

> "Like golden ripples, hastening to the land,
> To wreck their freight of sunshine on the strand."

And in the very heart of yon old orchard—you can see it even now, towering above all the rest—stands the dear russet apple tree, which in after years was the trysting place of Edwin and Ida. There are still the remains of a rude seat beneath its shade, while on its rough, worm-eaten bark are visible the initials —E. G., I. E., engraved long—long years ago. Almost across the gnarled roots of that old tree leaps a foamy brooklet, which even in the summer time has a pleasant song for every wanton clover blossom that bends to kiss its sparkling wave. On its green banks used to bloom the blue daisy and the yellow buttercup; and how often has the cunning Ida plucked one golden blossom to test its virtue upon this chin of mine, which e'er was smooth and soft as velvet.

Time has flown since. And days, and months, and years, like flakes of snow, had fallen upon the illimitable bosom of the ocean of rest, and had melted away and were no more. But they had brought a change, deep and glorious, to the youthful hearts of Edwin and Ida. Their youth had assumed the deeper flush of ripening age, and they were no more the unthinking play-mates sporting amid the golden shadows of life's summer day. But still the golden bow of hope, with its thousand airy tints of light and joy, spanned the misty ocean of the coming future.

Edwin and Ida were lovers. Time, who findeth out the measure of all things, had fully demonstrated it, and sometime Elverton Homestead was to be made glad with their bridal scene, which was a thought dearly cherished by both. Beneath that trysting tree, in the stilly night, years ago, they had met to part awhile, and then the murmur of their troth-plight went up to the thick stars like a benison from the heart of joy.

Edwin, like too many of our young men at the present day, had a desire to try his fortune in the city. Yet there was little need of this, for his father was wealthy for a farmer, and he an only son. From the infancy of Edwin it had been a dearly cherished wish of Farmer Gray, that after he should have been called

to his fathers, this, the only scion of a long and honest stock, should take the old homestead, and till its broad and fertile lands—which he himself had tilled from boyhood, and which his fathers had cleared from the wild, wild wilderness, and made to bloom like a garden. It was a bitter thought for him to think that his good old farm should pass away into other, and perchance less careful hands.

In this land of industry and enterprise, our youth can never bide their time. Their feverish pulse and restless hearts are ever dragging the anchor of fate. They hear continually the hurrying to and fro in the mighty shock of action, and they grow eager to mingle in the strife. With hearts light and buoyant, but unskilled, they launch forth into the rolling carrent, and are soon lost amid the countless fleets of human life—all hurrying to one predestined end. Yet it is strange, very strange, that those who were born and have been bred in the country, should be so eager to seek our great and crowded marts. Young men, you who till the fertile val'eys and the verdant hills of New England, oh, leave not your cottage home for the alluring temptations of the great city. You are now earth's noblemen, and your strong hearts send forth the vigorous pulse of ruddy life, but when you leave the spade and the plough-share, and wend your way toward the city, oh, think that you are on the last earthly journey—on the homeward road that leads to death. Behind the thronged counters, and in the dull work-shops of the town, lingers a dread malaria —and the dense, impure atmosphere of her crowded streets, to you, accustomed from birth to breathe the pure air of the country, will prove far worse than the horrid simoon of the burning desert.

At the age of eighteen Edwin Gray went to Boston, and entered a counting-house. I left home about the same time, and heard no more from him, save two or three random letters, until nearly three years after, when on my return to our native town of Rhode Island I passed through the city of Boston.

CHAPTER II.

And lo! even like a giant wight
Slumbering his battle toils away,
The sleep-locked city, gleaming bright
With many a dazzling ray,
Lies stretched in vastness at my feet;
Voiceless the chamber and the street,
And echoless the hall;—
Had death uplift his bony hand
And smote all living in the land,
No deeper quiet could fall.—WM. MOTHERWELL.

MIDNIGHT IN THE CITY.

NIGHT and I were in the great city; and the pointed hands upon the dial-plates of time had already told the advent of that dim and shadowy hour, which like the branch of some mighty river, parts our to-days and yesterdays.

Not a sound of life was upon that midnight air. Silence, deep and terrible as death, had laid its iron fingers upon the pulse of the great heart—those hundred streets, which but a few short hours before were heaving beneath the mighty tramp of the struggling tides of existence; and not one sight or sound that told of life or motion was abroad, save the lengthened shadow and the measursd foot-beat of each stealthy watchman, as he walked his stated round. Boston, with all its homes of joy and grief, lay wrapped in solemn slumber, as an army on the tented field, sleeping away the weary bivouac and the toil of battle; while the pointed spires of many a gilded fane, arose toward Heaven from amid the solemn gloom, like silent prayers from hearts of sorrow.

I was wending my way undisturbed toward my boarding-house on Pearl street, when suddenly a light broke upon my view, gleaming for a moment like a twinkling star in a stormy sky, and then growing dim, until it was almost undiscernible in the pervading gloom. Curiosity prompted me to enter the building where it led. I stood in a long, narrow passage. The passage was untenanted, but through the distant space and gloom, came the low tone of eager voices, like the hoarse ripple of a far off stream. At the end of the passage I reached a short flight of stairs, at the head of this was a broad door standing ajar; and this being thrown open at the sound of my steps, I entered what I saw at once to be a gaming saloon. Were you ever in one?—if not, I pray you never enter one. The room was large, very large; and brilliantly lighted with myriads of silver lamps, that swung from the arched ceiling above, like stars in the blue firmament Oh, it was a glorious scene within that room—a scene of gilded sin, and as it burst upon my vision with all its trappings of glittering wealth, it seemed like a dream of vanity playing on the fancy, and I almost deemed it such.

It contained all the implements of gaming, and its card and billiard tables were trimmed with crimson velvet and gold lace, which contrasted strongly, nay, almost fearfully, with the dark, solemn drapery, in which the room was hung. Had it not been for the costly carpets, the rich divans, the hundred founts of light, and the low, deep whisper, or the hoarse laugh of the devotees worshipping there, I could have deemed that dark drapery but the solemn weeds of mourning, and that room, teeming with liquid light, like the room of death.

The inmates of the apartment were mostly young men, though some of them had the appearance of being old in vice, while others seemed but as novices, who had just bent the knee for the first time, at the gilded altar of chance—the mælstrom of human passion, which swallows up all the higher and nobler impulses of God's immortal mind. This room, as I afterwards learned, was one of the largest gaming hells in Boston; but at the time in which I entered, there were not many playing, but mostly spectators. At the farther end of the room, I noticed a couple by themselves, wholly unregarded by the other occupants. As all the other tables were crowded, I thought that I would cross over and watch the progress of this game.

"This shall be my last game unless I win, for I have already lost nearly one hundred dollars this evening, and shall soon lose all if I continue playing, and there is no change of fortune. By Heaven! I will not go forth from this room penniless—a beggar

—this room where I have buried the fond hopes of my youth, and the hard earnings of long—long years of toil and abstinence. Oh, my God! the thought of this, and the memory of those days—the memory of that dear mother who, at the parting hour stood upon the threshold of my home, and said in tearful tones—'Edwin, beware of evil company'—and the memory of her, the Ida of my youthful love—she whom I pressed to this panting bosom, and whispered, 'I shall come again'—oh, this thought of beggary, and those dear memories of home, ring within my heated brain like a funeral bell that tells of death—I shall see that home again ah, nevermore!"

"Ha—ha—ha! rather a faint hearted crow that to come from the throat of a crack game-cock. Why man, take courage, and your luck will come again by and bye. Don't you remember that favorite saying of mine, which is: 'A faint heart never won a fair lady'—just keep that in view, and you will succeed well enough."

The voice of the first speaker thrilled me strangely. Its author could not have been more than one and twenty years of age, yet upon his flushed brow nestled many a deep wrinkle, that told of carking passion and a stormy breast—of the fiery wine-cup—of the midnight revel and of the gaming-table, where the heart's blood becomes cold and curdled, in the continued excitement of hope and fear, and starts to and fro, not like the steady pulse of a strong man, but like the fitful start of a dying flame.

As I drew near the table at which he sat, I recognized in that flushed face, the once noble features of him—of Edwin Gray—the companion of many a happy hour—the playmate of my boyhood. The recognition crashed through my brain like the sudden shock of a thunderbolt quivering through a stormy sky.

It was evident that Edwin did not recognize me, and at that time, perhaps, it was for the best that he did not. I went behind where he sat, and looking over his shoulder, watched the progress of the game, which was loo, a simple game, but in the management of which a skilful player can take a great advantage by what is called "sleight of hand." I soon perceived that Edwin must be the loser, for his antagonist, calm and collected, played with that consummate address characteristic of the perfect gambler, while my friend, powerfully excited and all of a tremor, played poorly and carelessly for one who was not a novice.

"Lost!" exclaimed Edwin, impetuously springing from his seat—"but thank Heaven, it shall be the last!"

"Oh, no! don't give it up yet. Let us try another hand, and I am sure your luck will prove better. I will give you a great chance this time. I will give you odds—two to one—now, that is fair, come."

Edwin hesitated for a moment, and then set himself down again at the fatal board. My heart prompted me to urge him to play no more, but I did not dare to, for fear that he would recognize me, and I did not wish for recognition until the coming morrow.

"Here are five dollars, and they are the last that I possess!" he exclaimed, in a suppressed voice, throwing them upon the table. As he ceased speaking there was an expression to his countenance that was indeed fearful, and I trembled for the result. But his reckless antagonist seemed not to heed this sudden outbreak of passion, for he was too familiar with such scenes to be the least unnerved by them. The game was soon finished, and as I had expected, Edwin lost.

Oh! I shall never forget the issue of that awful game—even now it stares me to agony! Its victim sat for a moment still as death—but the steady, sullen glare of his red eye-balls, burnt to the soul. There was something so terrible upon that broad furrowed face—not the wild expression of madness, nor of insanity, but something so full of loneliness, and unutterable despair, that even that iron-hearted antagonist started back in horror. Oh! as I looked upon that vivid scene of human misery, cold, beaded drops of sweat stood out upon my brow, and the hot life-pulse quivered up to my brain swift as lightning, while in that great room, the beat of my heart was audible. But now there was to come a swift changing scene in the play of that night's drama.

There was the sudden flash of a polished barrel—a sharp click, and a convulsive throw of the arm upward, and the muzzle of that deadly weapon bore upon the brain of Edwin Gray. Then, and not till then, did his horrid purpose burst upon my mind, and with a wild, eager grasp I clutched that upraised arm, but ere I could bear it from its fatal position, a gushing flame of fire—a ringing noise was in that room, and before it had died away, upon that tufted floor lay the form of a human being.

CHAPTER III.

——What I most prize in woman
Is her affection, not her intellect;
The world of the affections is thy world.
————In that stillness
Which most becomes a woman, calm and holy,
Thou sittest by the fireside of the heart
Feeding its flame. The element of fire
Is pure. It cannot change nor hide its nature,
But burns as brightly in a gipsy camp
As in a palace hall.—HENRY W. LONGFELLOW.

THE LAST SCENE.

YEARS had passed away, and still there was no change in the heart of Ida Elverton. The holy flame of love burnt as bright and pure, as when she and Edwin Gray parted beneath yon old trysting tree. Time can change all things beside a woman's love, and that is based upon adamant—something which no lapse of time, nor change of circumstances, nor life nor death can dissolve. The love of such a heart as beat in the breast of Ida Elverton is something infinitely better and more glorious to win, than the greatest laurels ever yet won by human being upon the fitful field of a nation's honor, for they will surely fade and pass away, but such love endureth forever. Its province is alike the kingly palace and the thatched cottage. Its holy flame burns as brightly beside the truckle bed of the dying peasant, as beside the

royal purple couch of earth's proudest monarch. It believes all things—hopes all things—and endures all things without resistance, and goes not away—no, never. And now this queenly Ida was summoned to the death-bed.

* * * * * * * *

Come with me awhile to the old homestead of Farmer Gray, for there ended the last scene in this humble tale—the self-made outcast had been welcomed home. It is but a little way from here; a stone's throw, for its broad fields border on those of Elverton Farm, and were it not for this dull evening mist, we could almost see its great chimneys even now. Oh, as I approach that old house, my heart grows eloquent with thronging memories of the good olden time. Now I can truly paint the last scene—the last scene in the fitful life of Edwin Gray. I remember that dying scene as though it were but yester-night.

We left Edwin Gray quivering upon the tufted floor of that gaming-hell in Boston; but that was not the death-quiver—the ball merely grazed the left temple, stunning him, but no more. And now he had been borne from the noise and din of the great city, to die in peace amid the pleasant relics of his boyhood, and at the home of his father's, for he knew that he could live but a little while longer, and it was his wish to be buried at home, in the quiet little graveyard of R———.

There was a strange light in the still fountain of the eye—a flush upon the cheek—a hoarse cough, that told of consumption and of no human aid—and he was prepared to die. And now we were all gathered in this old homestead, friends, kindred and all around the bed of one whose lamp of light flickered dimly to and fro, and who, ere another morn would come, with its pleasant sun and singing birds, was to be upon his homeward journey to the land of spirits.

"Dear friends! raise me for a moment," he cried, "just a moment, that I may look through this uncurtained window once more, up to God's broad and silent sky. Ida, take this palsied hand of mine, and let us look together, as we used to in other and better days. Come, Ida—look!"

These were the last words of Edwin Gray—the next moment and Ida pressed a pulseless hand—a lump of clay. * * * * * *

Ida Elverton still dwells here in the house of her childhood, and ever at the still hour of eventide, when the nightingale trills forth its plaintive song, she goes to wander in yon quiet home of the dead; for there, beneath the shade of a weeping willow, is the Mecca of her buried hopes.

FATE AND FANCY.

BY MARY DAVENANT.

"Where is the maiden of mortal strain
That may match with the Baron of Triermain?"

"Possibly you may be right, Helen—perhaps dear Frederick may be a little too fastidious," sighed Mrs. Huntingdon, who hated to admit imperfections in any one she loved, particularly in her favorite nephew.

Helen, a merry school girl of sixteen, laughed as she replied—"why, mamma, one would suppose I had suggested a new idea. I am sure you know as well as any of us that a more fastidious, fancy beridden creature than cousin Frederick is not to be found, on this side of the water at least. Heigh-ho, I am sure I am wearied to death with his ridiculous notions, and only wish he *would* make haste and get married, that he might have something better to amuse himself with than finding fault with me."

"I trust he will, my love, and from all I hear there is now every prospect of it. But you know very well, Helen, that his finding fault with you is all in kindness, because the rest of us spoil you too much."

"A strange sort of kindness!" replied Helen; "why, if I am to believe him, I have never looked, spoken, or behaved as I ought to do, from the day I was born until the present moment. One of the first things I can remember is his mourning over my red hair, as he called it," (Helen's hair was *now* auburn,) "and my large mouth; and I went away and cried because he said to Charlotte that I would never be good looking."

"Oh, my dear, you should not remember such things—he only said it to plague you."

"May be so, but I shall never forget it—and ever since it has been the same tune—Helen do hold up your head—Helen take care of your hands—Helen your back will be round as a tub—Helen nothing will ever transform you into a lady—Helen you will grow up a perfect ignoramus, and so on, forever without end. I only wonder I don't hate the sight of him."

"Nay, Helen, you must not speak so of your cousin. I love him as one of my own children, and I am sure he loves you all like a brother."

"Yes, just like a brother," retorted Helen, "a nice, old bachelor brother, who inflicts all his odd humors on his unfortunate sisters."

"Old bachelor, my love! What are you talking of?—Frederick is a young and handsome man."

"He is four and thirty if he is an hour," asserted Helen, with decision.

Mrs. Huntingdon was at first incredulous, but after a few moments spent in putting ages and dates together, she came to the conclusion that it must have been thirty years since the death of her only sister threw upon her father's guardianship the lovely boy of four, toward whom from that hour she felt almost a mother's tenderness. Within a year Mrs. Huntingdon married, and on the death of her father, which occurred soon after, the wealthy young orphan was transferred to her care, and grew up among her children. He graduated with honor at Cambridge, and subsequently spent some years in Europe, whence he returned just as his two eldest cousins were bursting on the world of fashion as belles of the highest order; and his youngest, Helen, a spoilt, ugly and troublesome girl of eight, had established her character among her brothers and sisters as "the worst child in the world."

Of course the busy public at once assigned to him the fairest of his elder cousins as his future bride, but as is mostly the case they were wrong. Frederick loved them both, and dearly too, but never dreamed of playing the lover's part to either. On the contrary, he at once assumed the place of a grave and thoughtful elder brother, and did his best, with some success, to induce them to adopt the highly polished and dignified manner he thought became them most.

The circle at Mrs. Huntingdon's, in which, though he nominally lived elsewhere, our hero was once more completely domesticated, lost of course none of its attractions in the eyes of her daughters' young friends by the addition thus made to it, and great were at first that good lady's anxieties lest her nephew should become the prize of some forward, fortune hunting damsel unable to appreciate his more noble and more sterling qualities. To her surprise, however, she soon discovered that, young as he was, Frederick was proof against blandishments that might have unsettled many any older head, and subdued many a harder heart; and the observation and experience of a few more years gave an entirely opposite direction to her apprehensions, and she began to fear that what was so hard to win might not to be won at all, which was almost worse than being won unworthily—for like most mothers of families (particularly of daughters) she had a holy horror of old bachelors.

Thus time went on. Charlotte and Elizabeth married, and beauty after beauty, the blonde and the brunette, the stupid and the spirituelle, wise and witty, flirt and prude had for a short season, in most cases it was short indeed, monopolized their cousin's attentions—but there was always a something, an indefinable something wanting about each and all of them that crushed the flattering hopes they had in their turn cherished of achieving so desirable a conquest. Still Frederick Wilmot continued single, though report at this time (for about the twentieth) had assigned him to be on the eve of addressing one who Mrs. Huntingdon

hoped with all her heart might soon become her niece, and the expression of her hopes on this subject to her daughter Helen, induced the conversation which this long introduction to our hero interrupted, just as he appeared in *propria persona* in his aunt's handsome drawing-room.

"Why, Frederick," exclaimed she—"you here? Charlotte told me you were to go with her to the opera this evening—you know Miss Arnold is to be with her."

"I know it," said Mr. Wilmot, disposing of his hat and stick, and settling himself (as gentlemen always do) in the most comfortable arm-chair—"but what of that?"

"Oh, nothing," said Mrs. Huntingdon, with a look however that interpreted it meant "a great deal," and a pause ensued, which was broken by Helen detailing to her mother some school girl prank, which made her fastidious cousin open his eyes at her and observe—

"Well, Helen, if these are the manners of the rising generation of women, may Heaven help us poor men! I had hoped you were improving, but I must give up now in despair."

"You gave me up seven years ago, cousin," replied Helen, laughing, "before you had been a month at home, and every month since into the bargain. The rising generation of women may thank Heaven all the men are not as particular as you are."

"My dear child," said Mr. Wilmot, "don't talk in that way. In the eyes of a man of sense a flippant manner will spoil the greatest beauty in the world."

"But as I am no beauty, it is no matter," said Helen.

"On the contrary, Helen, a plain woman has the greater need of every charm of mind, manner and accomplishment to render her agreeable."

"Indeed, cousin Fred. I know that well," said Helen, with a demure and furtive glance from the work over which she was bending, "for you have told me so at least three hundred and sixty-five times annually for the last seven years. I assure you I repeat it to myself every time I have a hard lesson to learn."

"One would scarcely suppose it. Have you learned the overture I brought you yet?"

"No! I hate it—I only wish mamma would let me give up music. I cannot bear it; strum, strum, strum forever is too tiresome for me."

"Helen you are incorrigible! a woman hate music! the most elevating, the most refining, the most spiritual of the fine arts!—but it is all of a piece," he added, sotto voce—"all of a piece."

"Come, Frederick, you must not be too hard upon Helen—she is a wild girl, and we have all spoiled her but yourself—and perhaps," added his aunt, smiling, "you may have gone a *leetle* bit the other way—constant schooling is sometimes of as little use as no schooling at all."

"I beg your pardon, dearest aunt—but I cannot bear to see a girl of Helen's abilities wasting her time as she does—why in little more than a year she will be going into society, and how will she appear if she goes on as she does now?"

"Don't distress yourself about me, cousin—I shall do very well without beauty or accomplishments either—see if I don't," said Ellen, laughing.

"You have one gift certainly," said Frederick, "and that is good temper; so go and practice Tancredi, Helen, and I will not scold you any more to-night."

The year passed quickly round, and Helen kept her word on her introduction into the society in which her sisters had produced so great a sensation. She knew she was not beautiful, she did not pretend to be accomplished, and she had none of the high polish of manner for which her sisters had been so celebrated. Night after night was Mr. Wilmot horrified by her brusquerie; day after day did he lecture, vainly as ever, upon the positive necessity of her being more guarded in her speech and manner; but Helen would in spite of all speak exactly as she thought, and think exactly as she pleased, and turn away from those she thought stupid, and laugh and jest with those she found amusing; and what her cousin thought worse, waltz with everybody that asked her, and flirt with them too, which was worst of all.

"I'll tell you what, cousin Fred," said Helen, in reply to one of his strictures on this subject, "you are a greater flirt than I, and a more dangerous one, for I don't flirt with any one that wants to marry me, and you do. Now I ask you seriously—do you ever mean to get married at all?"

"Certainly I do, whenever I meet with a person to suit me," replied Mr. Wilmot.

"Then I can tell you of half a dozen who would suit you admirably."

"Who are they?"

"Well—there is Miss Calcot," said Helen, who for her own reasons would not mention the first name that rose to her lips.

"Phoo! she is too old."

"Not more than thirty—*you* are thirty-five. Then there is Julia Garret."

"She is pretty, but wants mind."

"Sarah Staunton, then."

"She wants heart."

"Caroline Grant."

"Ill-tempered, ignorant and trifling."

"Then Miss Horton—you certainly can find nothing against her, beautiful and accomplished as she is."

"She is of a low, irreligious family, and at times is very awkward."

"You are too bad, cousin; but I have one more chance—Ellen Warren, I am sure you admire her, and if I am not mistaken she snubs that poor Mr. Nelson, who is so distractingly in love with her, for no other reason in the world than that she prefers you. I am sure you give her great cause to think you are in love with her, talking with her by the hour as you do, and listening so devotedly when she sings."

"Because she sings well, and talks well too. I do admire her very much, and always have done so, but as to being in love with her, or she with me, it is all nonsense. She is not the kind of woman that would suit me at all."

"But if you like and admire her so much, why will she not suit you?" persisted Helen.

"I cannot tell you why, but I can feel why, and that is enough."

"Tell me, I insist upon it," said Helen.

"Well then—I have a high sense of the beautiful, and Miss Warren though handsome, by no means reaches my ideal. I like warmth of character, and I suspect her to be cold. I like nature, and she is artificial—she has none of the enthusiasm, the deep appreciation of genius and beauty and truth that is necessary, absolutely necessary in a person I can entirely sympathize with—another thing too, I suspect she is worldly minded."

"Heaven bless you, cousin!—for you must wait until you get there to find a woman to your mind. Stay, let me see all your modesty requires. Extreme youth, perfect grace and beauty, great accomplishment, intellectuality, and all that—warm and enthusiastic, with not a particle of temper, religious, gentle, never daring to say her soul is her own—the highest breeding, yet perfectly natural in her manner—well born and rich of course. Now do you really expect to find such a woman?"

"Certainly I do. I could not dispense with one of the qualifications you have named, except the wealth, I have enough for both."

"And this Venus and Minerva and Griselda, and three graces and nine muses all run into one, and female saint into the bargain, is to go down on her knees and thank you, a mortal man of thirty-five, for the honor of your hand, and promise faithfully to love, honor and obey you with all your fastidious notions for the rest of her life! Upon my word, cousin, you may as well give up at once. You are no longer on the list of marrying men. As you have told me a hundred times I give you up in despair, and shall give Ellen Warren a hint to do the same."

Mr. Wilmot laughed, little dreaming Helen was in earnest, but she was so. She suspected there existed in the heart of her friend an attachment scarcely acknowledged to herself, but which might increase to the destruction of her happiness. Though some years her senior, Miss Warren had from the moment Helen appeared in society treated her with distinguished attention; and Helen, warm hearted and generous, soon repaid it with sincere regard. She saw that her friend was beloved by one every way worthy of her, but with her imagination pre-occupied by another she overlooked his merits; and Helen justly argued that if this obstruction were removed she might possibly see them more plainly. The result proved that she was right. Miss Warren, shrewd and worldly minded as she was, no sooner found her own previous misgivings as to Mr. Wilmot's intentions fully confirmed by Helen's playful assertions, but as she soon discovered positive convictions that her cousin was too ridiculously fastidious ever to be suited in a wife, than she wisely determined not to waste any more of her smiles upon him, and thus lose a good match in the vain hope of securing a better. So matters were soon arranged between her and her hitherto desponding lover.

"You must be my bridesmaid, love," she whispered to Helen, at the close of the season. "Mr. Nelson has promised you a charming groomsman, so, dear Helen, do your best to captivate him."

Whether Helen "did her best" or not nobody could tell, but she did captivate her handsome groomsman, but to the surprise of all, decidedly repulsed his attentions when she found they were serious. What could she mean?—Helen Huntingdon, the witty, gay, flirting Helen Huntingdon, without either beauty, fortune, or accomplishments, reject a man worth hundreds of thousands, and handsome and agreeable into the bargain! It was unaccountable, and to none more so than to Helen herself. Her family were most urgent with her on the subject, but Helen was positive.

She could not find a single objection to Mr. Laneham; she owned she liked him exceedingly, but would not be persuaded to think of him as a lover or a husband. Cousin Frederick was asked to use his influence, but he shrugged his shoulders and said, "he had never been able to influence her in his life, and could hardly hope to do it now." But he did venture a few words on the subject, which Helen cut short so decisively that he told his aunt that "nothing could be done—she was always wild and wayward, and would always remain so;" so for the five hundredth time her cousin gave her up in despair. Mr. Laneham was refused, and the whole family were provoked with Helen, who, however, seemed if possible more gay and wild than before.

"Will anything ever subdue that girl's spirit," said Mr. Wilmot to his aunt, as he was seated beside her one evening at a party watching Helen, who, her cheeks glowing, and her eyes sparkling with excitement, was rushing round in a waltz.

"Yes, two things, love and grief—may Heaven long avert the last—it would come with crushing force upon her. But I know no one who would be more improved than Helen by a touch of the tender passion. It was a sad disappointment to me that Mr. Lancham did not suit her fancy; it was strange he did not, for to me he was very attractive."

"It was very strange," said her nephew, "but Helen always was a most self-willed, unaccountable girl."

"I do not think you have ever done Helen justice," said Mrs. Huntingdon; "she has plagued you sadly I know, and is wild and wayward, but under that careless exterior she hides a depth of feeling, a strength of character, and a warmth of enthusiasm that none of my other children possess."

"An enthusiast she is in waltzing, I grant you," said Mr. Wilmot, smiling as he rose from his seat. "Come, Helen," he added, as she stopped for a moment before him, while her partner wiped his face and drew a very long breath, "you have tired Mr. Seldon completely out. Though my dancing days are somewhat over, suppose you take a turn with me."

"With you cousin?—who would believe it? I am so delighted, for I know you are a first rate waltzer," and they were soon moving round in time to the music, her slight and graceful form contrasting well with his tall and handsome figure.

"How I wish you would always waltz," said Helen, when the music ceased, and putting her arm in his they walked into a conservatory that opened upon the ball room.

"Always, Helen!—would you turn me into a dancing dervise?"

"But I mean at every ball. I never had so good a partner."

"I will waltz with you, Helen, if you wish it at every ball—but it is upon one condition—that you do not waltz with any one else."

"Why not?"

"Because, as you know very well, I hate to see you whirling round with any man who may choose to ask you."

"Then why did *you* never ask me before?"

"Simply because I never thought of it."

"Complimentary," said Helen—"and are you serious now in your offer?"

"Perfectly so."

"Well, then I hold you to it, simply because I like you better than any partner I ever had." Her cousin looked pleased, and for a moment thought Helen *almost* handsome.

Some six weeks after Helen was alone one evening in the drawing-room when Mr. Wilmot entered. Her parents were at the house of one of her sisters; but Helen being anxious to finish some work in which she was deeply interested, had remained at home. Her cousin took his accustomed seat, and the usual inquiries were followed by a silence of some duration.

"You are very industrious, Helen," said Mr. Wilmot, at length.

"And you are very silent," said Helen, "as I am so busy you should tell me something amusing."

"I?—I tell you anything amusing?—heigh-ho!"—here ensued several sighs of a most enlivening nature.

"What is the matter, cousin?—you seem so low spirited."

"I am not very well, I have been out of spirits lately."

"Dyspepsia, probably—but no, now I think of it, it cannot be that, for dyspepsia makes people unamiable, and you have been quite the contrary lately. I don't think you have scolded me for a month past; suppose you begin now, it will raise your spirits."

Had Helen looked up from the work that absorbed her attention so closely, she would have seen that something really was the matter with her cousin. As it was, she sewed on as diligently as possible, while he rose from his chair, walked several times across the room, and at last said—

"What a miserable, cross, ill-grained old bachelor you must think me, Helen. When I look back upon all the scolding and schooling I have given you for the last ten years, I almost wonder you do not hate me. And yet you will not believe me, I know—how can you?—it was a long time before I could believe it myself—I have lately found out that I am desperately, despairingly in love with you! Yes, you may well look at me so incredulously," he added, as the work dropped from Helen's hand, and she stared at him as if in a dream. "I, who have always prided myself on my understanding, have behaved like a blinded idiot—I have been seeking after a shadowy being, while the living reality was beside me—I have been vainly endeavoring to school you into resembling the creature my imagination had shaped out as necessary to complete my happiness, and I have awaked from my delusion just as I have succeeded in making myself perfectly hateful. You need not speak, Helen, I know it is so, I have known it for a month past, and it has made me miserable. But I cannot give you up without a struggle, and all I can ask you, Helen, is from this time try, if you can, to forget the past, and let me appear to you what I truly am—the being whose very life depends upon your favor."

Helen's face had sunk upon her hands, and she remained silent. She felt that the veil was now torn from her own heart—all her indifference to her former lover, her keen-sightedness into the feelings of her friend who had loved her cousin, was now explained. Still she could not speak, and while she was striving to master the feelings that overpowered her, he continued—

"When I think of all the folly I have uttered on the subject of my marriage, I feel almost mad. I now unsay every word of it, and whatever have been my silly fancies I now know that my fate is to love you, and you alone. I have loved you from your childhood, and shall always love you. And now answer, Helen, tell me truly, have I any hope?"

Her cousin had not ventured to approach her, but stood at a little distance awaiting her reply. Helen's nature was above disguise; words were denied her; but in a moment she was in his arms, weeping as though her heart would break; and afterward smiling through her tears at the transports of her cold and stately cousin.

"My own blessed, blessed Helen," he murmured, as he bent over her. "No, you shall not leave me," he added, as she struggled to disengage herself—"while you are here I know it is not a dream. Now could I have hoped for such happiness as this?"

"But you forget, cousin, the perfect beauty you were to marry," said Helen, when she had a little recovered from her agitation.

"It was you, Helen."

"And the wit, and the grace, and the savante, and the good, patient Griselda."

"It was all you—you—you."

"I have always heard," she replied, "that love works wonders, but I never believed it till now. I must try, however, to keep up the illusion."

And Helen has done so, for though she has now been many years a wife and mother, Mr. Wilmot still thinks her all that and more—proving, as Helen often says, that though he long since submitted to his *fate* he still indulges in flirtations with his *fancy*.

THE FANCY FAIR.

BY KATE SUTHERLAND.

Two leading members of a certain church, the minister of which was not too well paid, met one day, when the following conversation took place.

"I saw something this morning, Jones, that made me feel rather bad," said one of them.

"What was that, Mr. Smith?"

"I was standing by a stall in the market-house, and had just paid for a peck of some of the most delicious peaches I have tasted this year, when I heard a little voice say—

"'Buy us some peaches, papa, won't you? We haven't had peaches but once.'

"'No, dear!' was replied to this, in a low, and it struck me, almost sad tone. 'I can't buy any to-day.' The voice was familiar, and caused me to turn my head quickly. There stood Mr. Henry and his little son. They did not see me, and I was glad of it"

"Peaches but once!"

"Yes, think of that, Mr. Jones; and this delicious fruit so abundant and so cheap. I bought a basket, immediately, of the best I could find, and had them sent to his house."

"That was kind in you, Mr. Smith. I am glad you did so. The fact is, Mr. Henry's salary is too small. Four hundred dollars, and he with such a family! It is disgraceful to the congregation. A little self-denial on the part of a few of the members better off than the rest, would enable them to add to his income all that is needed for his comfortable maintainance."

"Yes; and they ought to practice such self-denial: until they do, their religion isn't worth a copper."

"Isn't it possible by some extra exertion to get a couple of hundred dollars added to his salary? There is ability enough in the congregation."

"We tried that, you are aware, a year ago, but met with no encouragement. Every one said he was taxed, already, for one charitable purpose or another, to a greater extent than he could really afford. When this is alledged, whether you believe it or not, there is an end of the matter. You have nothing more to say."

"No, of course not. This paying more for charitable purposes, already, than people can afford, is a very convenient and very common excuse I have heard it a hundred times, and may be, used it myself."

"There is a way in which we might get two or three hundred dollars added to Mr. Henry's salary."

"How?"

"By means of a fair. People who feel as if giving a shilling for another's benefit was going to ruin them, spend dollars, uselessly, to gratify themselves, without dreaming that they can't afford it. Our neighbors of the church over the way held a fair about a month ago, and cleared two hundred and fifty dollars; and we can do the same. If the people won't give willingly, we must cheat them into giving."

"A fair. A fair," was answered in a musing tone. "I confess I don't like fairs, and never did. But then——"

"Nor do I like them. But then, as you say——"

"Money must be raised somehow——"

"Yes; there is no getting away from that. It is worse to starve our minister than to hold a fair."

"I rather think it is. But can we get up a fair?"

"Easily enough. The women must be set to work, you know. There are three or four maiden ladies in our congregation, who haven't much to do besides distributing tracts and visiting the sick; and as the new tracts come only at intervals, and there are no sick to visit just now, they will take hold of a suggestion like this, eagerly. Never fear its being carried out if once set on foot."

"Will you put the ball in motion?"

"If you will permit me to use your name as approving the measure."

"You are welcome to do that; although I really disapprove the thing from principle."

"Very well. I'll soon see what can be done."

Smith forthwith called upon one or two of the ladies just mentioned, and after relating the incident of the peaches, and dwelling upon the insufficiency of the minister's income, closed by saying that it was the duty of the ladies of the congregation to get up a fair in order to increase Mr. Henry's salary.

The manner in which Mr. Smith brought the subject to these ladies' attention, left no room for them to gainsay his assertion as to their duty. They assented to his declaration, and forthwith, in a small meeting of influential female members, it was unanimously determined to hold a fair for the purpose of "increasing the funds of the church." The real object, it was thought best not to declare, as that might cause the minister to feel unpleasant; and would, moreover, betray to those out of the church, the fact that they paid him an insufficient salary.

And now began the busy note of preparation. Committees of two or three ladies, each, entered upon the duty assigned them, that of begging from those who could not, in justice to themselves and families, give another dollar toward church purposes, something for the fair. Who could deny the polite, smiling, importunate ladies? None! Mr. Baker, who positively refused some time before, to give another dollar toward replenishing the exhausted treasury of the church, although told that a quarter's salary was due and unpaid to the minister, handed

over five dollars for the fair without feeling that he had made a terrible sacrifice, or that he was in danger of ruin. Mr. Staytape, the merchant tailor, who, like Mr. Baker, had said more than once—"not another dollar," made liberal contributions of fine remnants of fancy cassimeres, broadcloths, figured silk vestings and velvet, for pin-cushions, needle-cases, ottoman covers, and the dear knows what all, without making a single wry face. And so the ball which Mr. Smith had set in motion was sent rolling from hand to hand. All the men were made to give something, either in money or raw material, and all the women were set to work in the manufacture of articles that would sell at the fair. There was quite an excitement in the congregation. But, as there always is and always will be, no matter what is doing, there were some fault finders in Mr. Henry's congregation. Some who did not approve of fairs, and, although they gave, for appearance sake, grumbled about it afterward.

"Why not make a direct contribution to the funds of the church at once? Why go in this round about way to get what is wanted?" they said. But they did not understand as much about this as Messrs. Jones and Smith.

A few days before the time at which the fair was to begin, the gentlemen, last mentioned, happening to meet, one of them said to the other.

"I saw Mr. Henry this morning, and would you believe it, he is warm in his disapproval of this fair."

"Indeed! What does he say?"

"That such schemes for raising money are unworthy of the Christian character 'Let men give freely,' he says, 'of what they have to give; but don't play off games like these upon them, in order to obtain the money they are not willing to bestow. They never do any real good; but always much harm.'"

"He will think differently, perhaps, when we take him two or three hundred dollars as the proceeds of the fair, and say it is for him."

"I rather think so. Still, I must confess that I am and always have been partly of his way of thinking. A fair is only an ingenious mode of extorting money from those who would not voluntarily give it for the purpose to which the proceeds are to be applied. But what are we to do? Mr. Henry is not adequately supported, although his congregation are fully able, and without inconvenience, to double his salary. They will not give anything more by direct contribution, and, therefore, I don't see that the crime of levying an indirect tax upon them is a very serious one."

"Nor do I," replied Mr. Jones.

The fair at length opened with a fine display of articles, few of which were classed among those called useful. Five-dollar dolls, dollar-pin cushions and pyramids of sugar candy were plentifully scattered about on the tables of the fair venders, who sought to effect sales with a tact and perseverance rarely to be met with in the most accomplished of women.

"Where is Mr. Henry? I haven't seen him here at all, yet?" asked one lady of another, toward the evening of the first day.

"I believe he doesn't approve of fairs," was replied.

"Why not?"

"Dear knows! He would find it hard to answer your question himself."

From one to another the whisper passed that the minister was opposed to fairs. This intelligence rather dampened the ardor with which some were entering into the business on hand. Others doubted the truth of what was said, and confidently looked for the minister in the evening. But he did not make his appearance. Nor, in fact, at any time during the fair, much to the surprise of some and the mortification of others.

At the close of the third and last day of the fair, notwithstanding all manner of expedients had been used to force people to buy articles that were of no use to themselves, nor to those to whom it was suggested they might present them—or, to buy even useful articles at double what they were worth—it was decided that what remained should be disposed of by raffle.

"Take a chance in this splendid doll? Only twenty-five cents a chance!" met you on one side—and

"Come; I know you'll take a chance in this raffle; its my whole table. Tickets fifty cents, and every one a prize," met you on the other. And so it went throughout the room People who wouldn't pay five, ten or twenty dollars for an article, were willing to risk twenty-five or fifty cents, or even a dollar, in the hope of getting it for that small sum. Did this differ anything from gambling? We will not say.

"Three hundred dollars, clear of all expenses," said Mr. Smith to Mr. Jones, on the next day.

"Indeed? So much! Really, I had no expectation that so large a sum would be realized! I rather think our minister will reverse his opinion on the subject of fairs when this handsome sum is paid over to him."

"There will certainly be some reasons presented to his mind in favor of doing so."

"Three hundred dollars! Our lady friends have done well, haven't they?"

"They have indeed. We must set them going again next year, for the same purpose."

"Oh, yes. A good thing, like this, must not be permitted to die out."

There was, belonging to the congregation of Mr. Henry, a poor widow named Heiner. She was very poor. Ill health, and but poor ability to get along in the world at best, made her income very small; inadequate in fact for the supplying of her real wants. She had two children, Henry, her eldest boy, who was apprenticed to a very good master, and was now in his twenty-first year; and Emma, an invalid daughter, the entire burden of whose support fell upon Mrs. Heiner. Henry was industrious and stood well with his master. He had about ten months' to serve before he would be free. To the expiration of his minority, for the sake of his mother and sister, he looked forward with great anxiety. It was his intention to devote all his earnings to their support.

Occasionally, this young man could get overwork from his master. Of this privilege he always availed

himself eagerly, and gave what he earned to his mother. It so happened that, from sickness, the poor widow got so far behind hand with her rent, that her landlord became alarmed for his money, and threatened to seize and sell all she had unless she paid him the whole, or a considerable portion of what she owed him. She did not tell her son about her indebtedness for rent, for she knew his inability to aid her, and did not wish to distress him.

Young Heiner, about this time, had been favored with more than his usual supply of overwork, and had accumulated ten dollors. His wish was to save about fifteen dollars, and with this to buy his mother a warm and comfortable cloak as a Christmas present.

On the second evening of the fair, the young man, who had heard a good deal said about it, was induced to go. He had never seen a fair, and his curiosity, excited by hearing others talk about this one, became strong enough to tempt him to part with a shilling, the regular admission fee. So he went. He did not dream of the danger he was to encounter there. Heiner was a fine looking young man, and his master did him the justice to dress him in respectable clothing; so that, though still an apprentice, he made as good an appearance as almost any one at the fair.

The gay scene within, quite dazzled and bewildered the young man. He had never witnessed any thing so brilliant. He moved down the centre of the room, looking first upon one side and then upon the other at the rich display of beautiful articles, and still more beautiful saleswomen. While thus passing leisurely along, a bright hand was laid upon his arm. He turned quickly. A pair of bright eyes were looking bewitchingly upon him; and he saw a pair of rosy lips, parted in a winning smile, while a low, sweet voice said—

"Come! You must buy something from my table."

A moment only passed, before Heiner found himself standing before a table, upon which was a handsome wax doll, sundry pin-cushions, ladies worked collars, and nick-nackeries of all imaginable kinds, while the young syren who had drawn him to the spot, was urging him to buy something. To him she was a perfect stranger. He had never even seen her before.

"Now I am sure you have got some little cousin or niece, whose gratitude for a present like this will cause her to name you in her prayers every night," she said, holding before him the beautiful doll. "It is only three dollars. Say you will take it."

What could the poor young man do? He had been but little into company; was unused to the ways of the world; and especially unprepared to meet an encounter like this, and come off victorious. He blushed—hesitated—tried to stammer out some excuse for not making the purchase. But the young lady read his character at a glance, and said—

"Oh, yes, but you must take it," and forthwith began to wrap it up very carelessly in paper.

"There," she said, when this had been done. "It is given away at that price." And she handed Heiner the doll.

Slowly he drew forth the purse that contained his little treasure, selected therefrom three dollars, paid it to the smiling girl, and taking his purchase, retired hastily from the room, blushing at the thought of being seen with such an article in his hand. The moment he reached the street he threw the doll fiercely down upon the pavement, and hurried away muttering to himself—

"Fool! Fool! Fool!"

Three dollars was a good deal of money for Heiner to lose, and he felt its loss more than the loss of thousands is felt by some.

On the next day much was said in the shop about the fair by customers, and among other things, it was stated, that there was to be a raffle at night, and that among the things to be raffled for were a number of valuable articles. A marble-top centre-table, worth twenty-five dollars, was mentioned among other things, the chances in which were only one dollar. There was also a large mahogany rocking-chair, the chances in which were the same; besides a good many other things.

Heiner had seven dollars left. The hope of not only getting back the three dollars he had lost, but of adding materially to his little treasure by means of the proposed raffle, began to fill his thoughts, and finally possessed his mind entirely. In imagination, he already had in possession at least fifty dollars worth of articles, which could easily be sold for thirty or forty dollars, and thus make him comparatively rich. He could hardly wait until evening came, so impatient was he to realize the little fortune that lay within his reach.

With his seven dollars in his pocket, the infatuated young man hastened to the fair. First he secured by the payment of a dollar, a chance in the centre-table; then one in the handsome chair, and so on in the various little lotteries that were established for pious purposes by fair and pious young Christians, until he had adventured upon this uncertain sea his whole treasure.

It was now that anxieties and fears began to arise in his mind. Should the result prove disastrous to his hopes? The thought made his heart sink trembling in his bosom. For two hours all was suspense. Then the various articles were raffled—some by drawing numbers as in a lottery, and others by throwing the dice.

At twelve o'clock Heiner went home wretched. He had gambled and lost all!

Three days passed before he could venture to visit his mother. Of the deep extremity she was in he knew nothing. But he felt so miserable about the loss of the little treasure he had accumulated, that he did not wish to see her, lest she should notice his unhappiness and inquire the cause.

"You look very much troubled, mother; what is the matter?" he asked of his parent, when he at length ventured to see her, and observed that she was unusually depressed in spirits.

"All my things have been seized, Henry," she replied, giving way to tears, "and are to be sold in a week. I owe twenty-five dollars for rent, and our landlord says that he must and will have it. He called day before yesterday, and said if I would pay

him ten dollars, he would wait longer for the rest. But I had not a dollar to give him."

"Mother! Why did you not tell me this before?" exclaimed her son, rising from his seat and wringing his hands as he paced the floor with agitated steps.

"It would have done no good," she replied, mournfully, "and would only have distressed you. I hoped that he would have borne longer with me, but I was mistaken."

"Yes, it would have done good," returned Henry. "I had ten dollars saved toward buying you a cloak for a Christmas present. But——"

The young man could not utter the words that were upon his tongue.

"Where is the money now, Henry?" eagerly asked Mrs. Heiner.

"Gone!" was the sad reply.

"Gone? Where?"

Henry related, without concealment or extenuation, all that had occurred at the fair. When he had finished his mother burst into tears and wept bitterly. The young man had no words of consolation to offer her. He sat silent, with his eyes upon the floor, feeling little less wretched than a condemned criminal. Suddenly he started up, and rushed from the house ere his mother could speak a word to prevent his going away.

To the house of the minister the young man bent his steps. He found Mr. Henry at home, who received him kindly. After he had been seated a few moments, the minister, who had been observing him closely, said—

"What is the matter, Henry? You look in trouble."

"And so I am, sir, in very great trouble. My mother has got behind hand with her rent, and the landlord has seized her things and is going to sell them all. If she could only pay him ten dollars, he would wait longer for the balance; but she hasn't a single dollar to pay. Oh! sir; do you not know of some kind person who would lend her ten dollars? I could pay it back in two or three months by doing overwork. I would let the money lie in Mr. Martin's hands, as fast as I earned it, and he would pay it over."

"Do you frequently earn money by overwork?" asked Mr. Henry.

"Yes, sir. I do all the overwork I can get."

"What use do you make of what you earn in this way? Do you spend it for yourself?"

"Oh, no, sir! I spend it for mother and sister."

One question after another, asked by the minister, elicited from the young man a full confession of what had occurred a few evenings previous.

"And so, my poor young friend," said Mr. Henry, after he clearly comprehended all, "they have sent you home from their vanity fair a ruined gamester! But your mother's things must not be sold. I happen to have twenty dollars in the house. Ten I will loan to you. You will repay it to me as fast as you can. And let this be a warning to you, never to risk a dollar so long as you live, in any game of chance, whether it be at a faro-bank, or in a so called charitable fair. The principle is the same, and the evil as heinous in the sight of Heaven."

The young man thanked the minister with tears in his eyes. As soon as he received the money, he hurried away to make glad the heart of his poor mother.

Heiner had not left the house of Mr. Henry over ten minutes, when Mr. Jones and Mr. Smith, accompanied by another leading member of the church, called in to see the minister.

"We have some pleasant news for you," said Mr. Smith, after they had been seated a few minutes.

"Have you, indeed? A pleasant task have they who bring pleasant news."

"We are commissioned, by the managers of the fair that has been held in our church, to pay you over the entire proceeds, which amount to three hundred and six dollars, to your salary for this year. Here they are."

And Mr. Smith extended a small roll of bank notes.

But Mr. Henry drew back, while his face became very serious.

"No, gentlemen," he said, firmly, "I cannot receive a dollar of it."

"Why not?" was asked, in profound surprise.

"If the members of my congregation think my salary inadequate to my support, let them increase it by regular contributions made for that purpose, and let it come as a free will offering. But with extortion and wrong, such as ever attend your fairs, I will have nothing to do. You bring me, in your hand, the price of honor, delicacy, justice and truth, and do you think I will accept of it? No! I would as lief touch fire! At your fair a young man, who had not the firmness to resist indelicate importunity, paid three dollars for a doll, which in anger he broke upon the pavement the moment he got into the street. He was an apprentice, who could only get small sums of money at a time, by overwork. In this way he had accumulated ten dollars, with which large sum, for him, he was going to buy his poor mother a cloak for a Christmas present. He was tempted to go to the fair by hearing so much said about it by those who visited his master's shop, and there he was robbed of three dollars—I call it so—you must excuse my plain way of speaking. But this was not all. He next heard about your beautiful gambling operations, and in the hope of winning back what he had already lost, went and risked the seven that remained in chances in centre-tables, rocking-chairs, and I don't know what all. He lost! When next he saw his mother, judge of his surprise and anguish of mind, to discover that she owed rent of which he knew nothing, and that her landlord had seized her things and was about selling them. Ten dollars the man had offered to take on account, and give a longer time for the remainder; but he had lost his ten dollars at the fair—he was a ruined gamester, and you made him such. In his extremity he came to me to ask if I would not get somebody to lend his mother ten dollars, he pledging himself to pay it back by his overwork."

"I will do it," said each of the three men.

"I have already set his heart at rest," replied the minister.

"*You* didn't lend it to him," said Mr. Smith.

"Yes. I happened to have twenty dollars by me, and I divided it with him."

His visitors were mute with surprise and mortification. At length one of them said—

"You certainly will not persist in refusing to take the money we have brought you. The thing is done now, and cannot be undone. The money is for you, and we cannot appropriate it to any other purpose."

"Not a dollar of it will I accept," was firmly answered. "You had better seek out all the instances of wrong done by the practical working of your fair, like that which I have mentioned, and make restitution. Certainly that poor young man ought not to be doomed to work late at night for two or three months to make up what he has lost, when his poor mother so badly needs all he can earn."

It was in vain to talk to Mr. Henry. He would not have a dollar of what had been cleared at the fair. His refusal to do so made quite a stir in his church. But like a rock in the ocean, he stood firm. although the waves dashed angrily about his feet. A day or two after he had loaned young Heiner ten dollars, that young man called upon him and returned the money with many sincere thanks. Some unknown friend, he said, had sent his mother money enough to pay all her back rent, and enable him to replace the small sum he had borrowed.

The exact disposition of the three hundred dollars. Mr. Henry never knew. A portion of it, doubtless, went into the funds of the church and helped to make up the increase of salary that it was voted him, a few months later. But he did not know this, nor think it his business to inquire. As for fairs, very little was ever said about them in his congregation. The subject was rather an unpleasant one.

THE FLOWER GATHERERS.

BY F. BENJAMIN GAGE.

It was spring—fresh, fair, and lovely spring!

All around was radiantly bright and beautiful. The white mantle of winter had fled away from the frozen hills.

The bright flowers bloomed along the borders of the green valley, and the unsealed mountain stream warbled its own wild music in its Maker's ear. The enchanting wild-bird spread her golden wing on the soft air, and again her welcome song echoed sweetly through the mysterious aisles of the dim old forest.

A fair, young child went out from the white cottage to gather flowers. The soft breeze played among her golden hair as she bounded joyfully on from rock to rock. She gathered bright blossoms. She seated herself beneath a waving elm, on the flower-embroidered turf, and twined them in a fair and beautiful garland. But that beautiful garland faded away. Its bright hues were gone. Its perfume had departed; and the young child wept bitterly over its faded leaves.

Then she looked around, and lo! a strange, bright being came and stood by her side. She glanced up through her tears and wondered at his strange beauty. His look was full of Heavenly sweetness, and he smiled upon her as he spoke.

"Why dost thou weep?" said he. "Sorrow has not touched your young heart! Time has not stolen the bloom from your cheek! Go, gather the blue violet! Gather the golden buttercup—the wild blooming rose, and weep no more!"

Again the child wept. She held up her garland of withered flowers.

"I gathered them in the waving grass," said she. "They were bright with pearly dew, and the morning air was laden with their balmy sweetness. But, oh! they have faded away! Their bright hues are gone;" and still the young child wept bitterly over the drooping leaves!

"And I, too, gather flowers," said he. "I gather the incense of their sweet lips. I gather the bright cups and bear them away to a far distant and glorious land, and twine them in a fair, unfading wreath. There is no sun in that land—no moon nor stars. But the air is filled with golden light, and balmy with unspeakable melody, sweeter, far sweeter than the wild bird's warbled song. And the flowers that I gather fade not away, for night comes not there, and the frosts of death gather not upon their fragrant leaves."

"Oh! how I should love to see that beautiful land," said the weeping child.

Then she cast away her withered garland, and held forth her hand to the spotless being at her side. He smiled upon her, and, as he drew nearer, he laid his hand upon her own, and whispered—

"Thou shalt see that beautiful land!"

Day rolled away.

The golden sun went down in the West.

Evening returned balmy and beautiful, and the mother sought her child.

She found her seated beneath the waving elm; but her eye was dim, and her cheek was hard and cold!

She had gathered fragile flowers—she had woven a frail garland. It had faded away, and now lay withered on her pale cheek!

But the Angel of Death had gathered a brighter flower—had borne it away to twine in the glorious and unfading garland of Heaven! *The young child was dead!*

BRING FLOWERS.

BY T. F. WOODFORD.

Bring flowers, fresh flowers, to strew above
The green graves of the early dead!
Bring beauteous flowers to deck the sod,
And all around their perfume shed!
For meet it is that they who died
So early in Life's golden Spring,
Whilst flowers are making sweet the air,
And birds their love-songs sweetly sing—
Should have their emblem in the flowers,
Like which their span of life was brief!
Like them were bright and beautiful—
Like them unknown to cares or grief!
Like flowers that perish'd in all their loveliness—
Lovely were they e'en in Death's dark embrace!

Bring flowers, bright flowers, to deck the graves—
The green graves of the early lost!
The young, the pure, the beautiful—
Blighted by Death's untimely frost!
The cold remains of those we loved
Repose beneath the April sod—
Yet beauty lingers round their dust—
By fairy feet their graves are trod!
Bring flowers to bloom upon the turf
That wraps their senseless forms of clay—
Like flowers that faded all too soon,
Yet beautiful in their decay!
'Tis meet that they who lived so few, yet happy hours,
Should have their emblem in the Spring's bright flowers!

THE FOREST HOME

BY MRS. HUGHES, AUTHOR OF "ORNAMENTS DISCOVERED," "AUNT MARY'S TALES," &C. &C.

CHAPTER I.

"HERE we are, Mary!" said Eloise Deland, to her cousin Mary Woodville, as they seated themselves near the table of a well-stored library, after an absence from home of some weeks, "once more we are in our own dear home! And after all, though we are so far up in the back-woods, I believe this is as pleasant a place as any I have yet seen."

"I certainly would not change 'Forest Home' for any home that I ever saw," returned the cousin.

"Bless me! What can this be?" exclaimed Eloise, taking up a letter which lay before her on the table, with her father's address on the back. "The handwriting is strange to me, and yet it cannot be from any of pa's clients, for he is so particular about keeping all his business papers in his office," and as she spoke, with all the confidential familiarity that existed in the family, she opened and read the letter. "Why, Mary!" she continued, "who can this Mr. Charles Loraine be that is lauded and glorified in this manner to pa, by some gentleman in England! Do read, and see what a wonderful youth is come amongst us!"

"He must be a perfect paragon," returned Mary, after reading the letter. "But I wonder how it happens that we have never yet seen or heard anything of him."

"Oh! I suppose he has seen too much, and travelled too far, to think of coming to pay his respects to two back-woods girls, whom he probably expects to find without shoes or stockings, and sitting down, according to the fashion of the country, to arrange our hair as soon as he enters."

"After having seen the other members of the family, he would hardly expect to find us such accomplished characters as that," returned Mary, laughing. "But here comes your mother, who will tell us all about him. Pray, aunt!" she continued, addressing Mrs. Deland, who just then entered the room, "who is this extraordinary Mr. Charles Loraine?"

"I can only say," replied Mrs. Deland, "that if you have read that letter, you know pretty nearly as much of him as we do, except that he appears to be, in every respect, worthy of the encomiums that are bestowed on him."

"But why did none of you tell us anything about him?" asked Eloise. "Beaux are not as thick as blackberries here, that you should forget to give us so important a piece of information."

"That you may set down to Adelaide's account! Attaching all the importance to such an event that a girl of fourteen is likely to do, she bound your papa, myself and Theodore to secresy on the subject, and has enjoyed, exceedingly, the idea of your surprise when you met."

"I mean to throw my spell over him at once," said Eloise.

"You had much better try for his friend," returned her mother, who was always ready to join in a harmless joke.

"What! are there two of them?" exclaimed the daughter.

"Yes! Mr. Ellison, a handsome young man of large fortune, is a much more important personage in the eyes of our young ladies here about, than Loraine is; for the latter is not wealthy, though as a very skilful engineer he must always be considered independent."

"Well then, Eloise," said Mary, laughing, "as you intend to throw out your nets for the engineer, I think I had better try for the fortune. It would certainly be very convenient to get a rich husband to fill up all deficiencies." In this manner these two lively girls who had never yet tasted sorrow, amused themselves in disposing of the expected beaux, though perhaps scarcely any girls of their age, with so many charms to attract the fluttering train, cared in reality so little for their presence.

Eloise was the second child of Mr. and Mrs. Deland, who had only two others:—a son, Theodore, a youth of about nineteen years of age, who was studying law with his father; and another daughter Adelaide, who as a girl of fourteen was too unformed to admit of description; though her amiable disposition and pleasing manners, and, more especially, her devoted attachment to her father, made her a great favorite with all her relatives. But Eloise appeared to have engrossed all the beauty of the family, and was, perhaps, as perfect and lovely as can well be imagined. Her luxuriant flaxen hair, transparent skin, with the delicate flush of health coloring her cheeks, coral lips surrounded by laughing dimples, and her large, full, bright blue eyes, were all exquisite, and as her manners were easy and graceful, though exceedingly playful, no one could accuse her of presumption, however high an object she might mark for conquest. Yet beautiful as she was, she was not without a rival, and one, before whom, in the estimation of most beholders, even her charms had to give way. Mary Woodville, the portionless orphan child of Mrs. Deland's sister, was of the same age as Eloise, and they had been brought up together from the time that they were only a year old; and so closely had they ever been united, that they had appeared, to use the words of Shakspeare,

> "Like to a double cherry, seeming parted,
> But yet an union in partition."

Their minds, however, were very dissimilar. Conscious of her beauty, and fully sensible of the power with which it and no ordinary share of talent invested her, Eloise seemed as if born to rule, not, however, with an iron rod, but by the influence of winning

playfulness and fascinating smiles. But though so fully disposed to estimate her own advantages, not a shade of jealousy ever darkened her countenance toward her cousin. On the contrary, she was always delighted to hear any one expatiate on Mary's beautifully formed hazel eye, shaded by their long, dark silken lashes, her skin of alabaster whiteness, only appearing more conspicuously pure as contrasted with the rich glow that suffused her cheeks, the perfectly formed mouth, the graceful neck—in short the harmony, we had almost said sublimity of her whole form; which bespoke in every look and motion a mind equally faultless, and which when seen made all other objects sink into the shade; yet could Eloise hear all these beauties spoken of, not only with an unclouded brow, but with a glow of pleasure that gave additional charms to her own face.

CHAPTER II.

"What frock do you intend to wear, Mary?" asked Eloise, one afternoon as they were dressing for an evening party, about two weeks after their return.

"I think we had best put on our new mouslin-de-laines," replied her cousin, "for as the horses are all engaged, your pa says we must walk, and those dresses will be less liable to be injured than any others that we can wear."

"Oh! no!" returned Eloise, "I want to wear my painted muslin, for I mean to do great execution, this evening."

"And the first proof of your power, will be the execution of your poor frock, for it is so very thin and delicate, that the probability is it will be torn to tatters before you get through the woods."

"I expect to catch the beaux with it at all events, so that it will only be putting it a little in practice before hand," was Eloise's laughing reply, and as she spoke she took the dress in question out of the wardrobe.

"You surely are not serious about wearing that frock, Eloise!" remonstrated Mary, as she saw her cousin preparing to put it on. "Only consider the kind of road we have to go!"

"I shall put mine on, certainly," said Eloise, in a tone that proved to Mary, who knew her so well, that her mind was made up. "But you can wear whatever you please, you know."

"Oh! I shall wear the same as you do, whatever it may be, as your ma wishes us always to be dressed alike; but I wish, dear Eloise! I could prevail upon you to wear any other frock, than this very delicate one."

"I am determined," said Eloise, and on went the disputed dress. Mary's was also put into requisition, and they set out at a very early hour, as they had a long walk to take. Theodore would gladly have persuaded them to wait for him, as he was not quite ready; but they said they wished to have time to walk slowly.

Eloise joked merrily, as she went, about the mischief she meant to do with her beautiful frock, when, on coming to a very narrow path, where they were obliged to walk in Indian file, as they called it, Eloise, with her frock wrapt close around her to avoid its being caught by the brambles and briars, was going first, when on a sudden Mary rushed forward, and catching hold of her, pulled her back with her whole strength. At the same instant the sound of Mary's frock, tearing down from the waist to the hem, was heard, whilst an almost total divorce took place between the skirt and the body.

"What in the world has possessed you, Mary?" cried Eloise, in extreme astonishment. "Have you lost your own wits instead of putting some luckless wight out of his?"

"Look! look!" cried Mary, as she still held her cousin in firm grasp.

Eloise turned at this exclamation and saw Mary's usually coral lip pale and quivering, whilst her eyes seemed almost ready to start from their sockets.

"Look! look!" she repeated, scarcely able to articulate, and pointing, as she spoke, to something before them.

Eloise, at this, followed the direction indicated, and beheld a large rattlesnake lying across the road, on the very spot where she herself had been about to set her foot.

"Well!" said Eloise, "I have escaped the danger, but your poor frock has fallen the sacrifice."

"Oh!" cried Mary, still pale and trembling with the thought of what might have been. "How can you talk of a frock at such a time!"

"Because," returned her companion, "the one is only what might have been, and the other, what is."

"And what are a thousand tattered frocks in comparison to the danger you have escaped?"

"And can you talk in this way after my being so self-willed!" said Eloise, in a tone of self-repoach.

Before Mary had time to answer Theodore came up, and, seeing the cause of their alarm, by means of a thick club succeeded in killing the dangerous reptile, after which, as is usual on such occasions, he cut off the rattle as a trophy of his prowess. This done, and Mary's composure on the death of the enemy being restored, the attention of all three was turned to the tattered garment. For Mary to proceed in the state her dress was in was impossible, nor was it much more practicable for her to return to change it, and afterward to pay the visit, for this would take to much time.

After some consultation, it was determined, at Theodore's suggestion, that they should wait where they were, only taking care, as Eloise said, neither to sit nor step upon rattlesnakes, till he ran home and brought Mary another dress.

"Then," said he, archly, "you may easily find a dressing-room under the thick branches of some tree, and for a mirror you can never be at a loss whilst you have Eloise's eyes so near you."

"Very well said, my brother," replied the lively girl, with pretended gravity. "I admire both the courtesy and discrimination you display, and am happy to think Mary has so gallant a knight to assist her in the unhappy dilemma into which my wish to shine in envied splendor has involved her."

Things being thus arranged, they sought for and

soon found a safe and comfortable seat, and Theodore proceeded on his mission.

CHAPTER III.

"Here comes Theodore, trotting on a great cart horse!" cried Eloise, laughing, as the form of her brother appeared through the trees. "Where in the world did you meet with that noble steed?" asked she, as he came up to them.

"I borrowed it of Ned Winfield," replied the young man. "I prevailed on him to stop his ploughing till I brought the frock. And now I will return with my Rosinante while Mary is equipping herself." So saying, he handed Mary a parcel neatly pinned up in a napkin. He was scarcely out of sight, however, before they both at once uttered a loud exclamation, for, on unpinning the parcel, Mary found instead of the dress she had sent for, an old rusty black one, which she scarcely ever wore.

"What can be the meaning of this?" cried Eloise. "Some of the girls have been playing a trick upon you."

"Oh, no!" returned Mary, who never upon any occasion formed a severe judgment; "it is only a mistake. None of them, I am sure, would intentionally serve me so. But never mind! Worse things might happen than for me to make my appearance in an old frock."

"You surely would not think of going in this forlorn looking thing!" remonstrated Eloise.

"I shall certainly not deprive myself of the visit on account of it," returned her companion. "The thing can soon be explained to Louisa, and she will take good care to make the why and the wherefore known to all her guests."

"I would not appear in a party with such a dress for the world," said Eloise, with energy.

"Then you do yourself great injustice, dear Eloise," said Mary, looking at her cousin affectionately; "for believe me, when you appear your dress will be the last thing that is thought of, even were it of sackcloth."

"Oh! that would only make me appear the more interesting," returned Eloise, laughing, "for then I should be the 'Fair Penitent.' But only suppose, Mary, that the two English strangers were to be there. How would you feel then?"

"Exactly as I should feel if they were not there. Do you imagine I would value the opinion of any one, who could think either ill or well of me, on account of an article of dress merely?"

"Yes! If your dress were such as to give them the idea of your being a slattern."

"That opinion could scarcely be formed by any reasonable person. The singularity of my attire will, at once, prove it to be accidental."

"I believe, Mary," said Eloise, looking steadily in her cousin's face, "you are not quite the humble being we have always taken you for. I suspect, after all, you have your fair proportion of pride."

"There is a pride, Eloise, that I consider it the duty of all to encourage. We can have but a small portion of self-respect if we do not feel ourselves superior to the little adventitious circumstances of dress. But come!" she continued, with a smile, "I am delivering a moral lecture instead of——"

"Instead of acting one," interrupted her cousin, "which after all is the most impressive mode of teaching. Even ma's gentle remonstrance has frequently had less effect on me, than the sight of you quietly proceeding in the right course. I only wish I had possessed a little more of the right sort of pride this afternoon, and this walk would not have proved so unfortunate."

"Well! Let us now try to get to the end of it," said Mary, who had changed her dress and folded up her tattered frock.

They had not gone far before they were overtaken by Theodore, whom they questioned closely about the mistake that had been made. He said that when he reached home, he found that his mother and Adelaide, as well as Susanna, the girl that had the care of the chambers, were all out. He had, therefore, given a young girl, who had only been in the family a short time, the best directions he was able about finding the frock that was wanted, and particularly charged her to pin it neatly up, and as he found she had paid strict attention to the last part of his injunctions, he took it for granted that the rest was equally well executed, and gave himself no further thought on the subject.

They soon arrived at their place of destination, where they found a large party already assembled. Their adventure was told to their friend Louisa, who had slipped into the dressing-room to give them a more cordial welcome than she could have done in the parlor, and, after laughing over the catastrophe, she returned to her company to take off a little of the formality that generally reigns during the early part of the evening, by detailing the particulars to each of her visitors in turn, when we believe we may venture to say that there was more pleasure than sympathy felt on the occasion. Indeed there were few present who would not have considered it a happy circumstance for themselves, if anything had occurred to cast the beautiful Mary somewhat into the shade. However never before did she look more strikingly, more sublimely beautiful.

Soon after the formalities of tea were despatched, the gentlemen began to flock in. Louisa immediately hastened to the piano. As she touched the keys, and a favorite air resounded, a space in the centre of the room was cleared, and dancing commenced. Eloise who was always ready to join in the dance, was one of the first to be led out; but though frequently solicited, Mary declined, for she felt a little fatigued with her walk, and had besides, in consequence of her fright, a slight headache. Disposed to escape from the noise and heat of the room, she took Louisa's arm, when the latter gave place to another performer, and proposed going into the next apartment, where a centre-table stood covered with annuals, magazines and prints. Louisa, who was exceedingly attached to Mary, was delighted with the opportunity of having a little quiet conversation with her, and remained as long as her duty to her other visitors would permit. When obliged to go, she placed a

book before her friend, which contained a number of beautiful views of various parts of Europe. Much amused, Mary had sat a long time undisturbed, except by some gentleman occasionally trying to persuade her to join the dancers, or a gay belle who came to say she was dying of heat, yet who yielded a ready assent to the first youth who invited her back to encounter the same miseries; when happening accidently to look up, she saw a strange gentleman standing in the entry, but directly opposite to her, with his eyes fixed upon her with the most intense earnestness. Mary immediately suspected him to be one of the young Englishmen. He could hardly be said to be above the middle size, but the graceful proportions of his person took off all appearance of deficiency in height. His complexion, though rather dark, was peculiarly clear and bright, and his fine dark eye beamed with a union of softness, intelligence and spirit. His nose and mouth were well formed; his teeth remarkably white; and his chin, of itself handsome, was just so much divested of its dark glossy covering as to display an exquisitely formed dimple, that seemed to have been placed there for the little God of Love to rest in, and laugh away the hearts of all who ventured to look at him. As Mary raised her head their eyes met, and in an instant hers again sought the picture that lay before her, but scarcely had she time to ask herself which of the strangers this cou'd be, when Louisa entered the room, and begged permission to introduce Mr. Charles Loraine. As every species of affectation was a stranger to Mary's bosom, she received him with easy courtesy; and he being too much a man of the world to have any difficulty in drawing her out, especially when aided by the pictures before her, they were soon engaged in an animated conversation. There were few of the views that he had not seen in nature, and he pointed out the various beauties, and described those which the painter had failed to delineate, with so much taste and feeling that Mary listened with delight, and felt as though she had never known what was truly beautiful before.

It may well be imagined that with two beings so well calculated to enjoy each other's society, the time flew rapidly away. The noise and uproar of the adjoining room, which became more and more boisterous as the night advanced, was unheeded, and when the party began to break up Loraine expressed astonishment; and Mary, though she said nothing, felt it no less strongly. Eloise, who had already been introduced to Loraine, now joined them, accompanied by the other Englishman, who was immediately introduced to Mary. He was a tall, fine looking man, with handsome features, and an exceedingly amiable expression of countenance, but without any extraordinary marks of intellectuality. As it was moonlight, the two girls prepared for their walk home with great pleasure, positively refusing their host's offer to send them in his carriage. The two Englishmen, avowing their fondness for a moonlight ramble, declared their determination to accompany the girls a part of the way, for the purpose, as they said, of keeping off the rattlesnakes. By a little manœuvring Loraine contrived to secure Mary's arm; whilst Ellison took possession of that of Eloise, and Theodore was sent on before as an advanced guard. Gay and happy they threaded the forest maze; and to hear their lively, but innocent mirth, and the light hilarous laugh that seemed every now and then to startle the echoes, one would have imagined that sorrow could never find its way into bosoms so full of the gladness of life.

CHAPTER IV.

"Well, Eloise!" said Mr. Deland, as he came to the breakfast-table the next morning, and with that cheerfulness and good humor which accompanied his intercourse with all, both at home and abroad, "did you kill your thousands or your ten of thousands, last night, with that extraordinary frock?"

"Oh, pa! Do not, I beg of you, let me hear another word about the frock, for I am perfectly sick of the thought of it, and never intend to give myself any more concern about dress as long as live. I am not sure that I shall not make myself a linsey gown, as the people call them, and wear it forever more!"

"And what has made you so philosophic all at once, pray?"

"Why the success that I found attended Mary in her miserable old black frock. She was absolutely the belle of the party!"

"Oh, Eloise!" ejaculated Mary, in a tone that seemed to say, "how can you talk so!"

"Yes! It was certainly the case, Mary! Ask Theodore when he comes down, and if he has got his senses sufficiently awake to understand what you mean, he will tell you the same thing."

"I suspect it was owing to her wearing a dress that you have not yet learned how to put on, Eloise!" said her mother, with an arch smile.

"The dress of humility, or of simplicity, or modest dignity, or some of those vestal garments, I suppose you mean," returned Eloise, laughing; "for I believe she huddles all those on at once, and wears them morning, noon and night, lest she should forget to put them on some time when they are wanted, as poor unfortunate I so often do."

"You seem to be arrayed in a superabundance of them this morning," said Mary.

"No wonder! When I saw how much they were admired last night, even under the old rusty black frock."

"I wish I had been at home when Theodore came," said Adelaide, "and I would have taken good care that Mary had the frock she wanted; but Biddy says she understood she wanted a frock that was fit to walk through the woods with, so as to save her company frock."

"Well! I assure you, my sister, you need not give yourself the least concern about the mistake; for the gentlemen were perpetually running into the back parlor to look at either her or it; and as to Mr. Loraine——"

"Why you danced with him two or three times!" interrupted Theodore, who had entered the room as Eloise was speaking.

"That is very true, but it was before he had set his eyes upon Mary. After that, he simply danced one

set with Louisa, as he had engaged her before, and then no more dancing for him; even though he had expressed the hope, after we had finished the last dance, that he would be so fortunate as again to find me disengaged. But after he had seen Mary no more hopes or wishes were wasted upon me."

"You had a pretty good substitute in his friend," returned the brother.

"He might have done tolerably well if I had not happened to see the other first; and if I had not been obliged to hear the conversation of Loraine and Louisa as they stood near me in the dance."

"What did they say?" asked Mr. Deland.

"My attention was first caught by hearing Louisa, who, I believe, is as anxious about Mary's looks as if they were her own, accounting for the singularity of her dress, which, she ended by saying, was of less consequence to her than it would have been to any one else; I then heard Loraine, who stood next to me, murmur to himself, and quite unconscious, I believe, that he could be heard—

'When unadorn'd adorn'd the most.'"

"A very unhackneyed quotation," returned the father, with assumed gravity.

"Then Louisa asked him if he did not think her very handsome. 'Perfect! perfect!' he replied, with energy."

"I hope, Eloise, you have done detailing this detestable conversation!" said Mary, whose face and neck were both a deep crimson.

"No! indeed I have not! you must hear a good deal yet, for I am determined to punish you for taking my beau from me. Then pa!" she added, with a mischievous look, "on Louisa's making some remark about the shape of the nose or mouth, or some such feature, he said, 'it is not the particular form of the features that I care for. I could not pretend to say what are the features of the Madonna, but the sublime expression of the countenance is engraved on my heart, and that of your friend resembles it more closely than any human countenance I ever saw.'"

"You have certainly got your revenge," cried Mary, starting from the breakfast-table as she spoke, and quitting the room.

"Bravo! bravo! I have beaten you off the field!" Eloise laughingly exclaimed, as Mary closed the door after her.

From this time the two young Englishmen began to find Theodore's company exceedingly interesting, and became, through his means, almost constant visitors at "Forest Home." About this time, in consequence of having to make preparations for Adelaide's going to school, Eloise and Mary had, for a time, to suspend all visiting, so that the gentlemen, to their great satisfaction, generally found them in the evenings at home. Under such circumstances their acquaintance soon became intimacy; and they shortly felt themselves so familiarized in the family that they no longer required Theodore's patronage to procure them access to it. Ellison made no secret of his devotion to Eloise, and bore all her caprices with the patience of a martyr; while she, though constantly taking pains to convince him that he had no influence over her heart, still received his attentions, and made herself merry at his cost. Her mother sometimes remonstrated with her about her behaviour, but she declared she had told him frankly what he had to expect, and after that, she said, he must just take his chance. Very different were things with Loraine and Mary. An almost devotional admiration on his side; and though a less extravagant, a no less sincere one on her's, prepared the way for a warmer feeling, if in him at least it had not at once taken possession of the heart. But though months passed over in the continual enjoyment of each others society, and in the inward conviction on the part of each of being beloved, Loraine had never ventured to speak explicitly of his passion. A feeling of deference in himself, which, when he considered Mary's extreme youth, he almost wondered at, still held him back, and he preferred luxuriating in the sweet hopes that filled his breast whenever her eye met his, to risking any abatement of his happiness by a too hasty avowal. Oh! sweet moments of virtuous and unmingled happiness when two pure and ingenuous hearts thus revel in the delight of mutual affection, and each find in the wish to become more worthy of the other only a stronger incitement to all that is valued by man and approved by God.

Loraine had, one evening, contrived to draw Mary to a window where he could, apart from the rest, enjoy the sweets of an unrestrained conversation with her. They were suddenly, however, interrupted by Eloise calling to her cousin to ask if she did not think the high, stiff collars seemed to be made for the express purpose of sawing off gentlemen's ears, the most disfiguring things in the world. Now it happened that the collars which Ellison wore were exactly of that description, and Eloise, as if solely for the purpose of tormenting him, went on expatiating on the Byron style of dress as being both becoming and classical, whilst Ellison seemed literally to writhe under her sarcasms.

"How could you torment poor Ellison so?" said Mary, after the two friends had taken their leave. "It is really absolute cruelty!"

"Oh! it is good for him!" replied the volatile girl. "It is exercising him in the art of pleasing. You will see that the next time he comes he will have his collar as much too low as it is now too high; for he has just about as much taste as a monkey that imitates without being able to judge of the right proportions."

"And you," said her mother, "have the monkey's disposition to torment, without much more power of judging when you go too far. You will try this young man's patience till he can bear no more, and then, as is no uncommon thing with you, will regret having given so much indulgence to your wayward humor."

"Whatever may happen, he will have no right to blame me," returned the daughter; "I told him the first time he spoke seriously to me that I neither did love him, nor ever could. And when he begged me to allow him to try to teach me, I told him I was sure it would be all lost labor, and that he must take the entire responsibility upon himself, and not blame me when he found he had failed. So I am sure he has nothing to complain of—I gave him fair warning."

"Perhaps he goes upon the principle that when a woman deliberates she is lost," replied the mother, as she took up her bed candle and retired.

The next evening Loraine appeared alone and said Ellison was suffering from a severe headache. They all joked Eloise for having frightened away her lover; and when, on the following night, he was again absent, the family became more and more convinced that he was gone, and Theodore, whenever he came near his sister, repeated in a tone of affected tenderness—

"'Till quite dejected with my scorn,
He left me to my pride."

But Eloise persevered in the belief that he was only waiting to make some great metamorphose, and that when he returned he would be found to be quite an altered man. At length, at the end of about a week, he appeared, and the moment he entered the room Eloise began to laugh.

"Why, Mr. Ellison!" she exclaimed, as soon as she could speak, "you surely expect to suffer martyrdom, and have prepared yourself for the block. And indeed you might do like—who was it?—ah! Anne Boleyn who clasped her neck and congratulated herself that it was so small it could easily be divided."

The young man stood completely at a loss how to look, or what to say. He had remained at home, and had employed the most accomplished tailor that the neighborhood afforded to make him a new suit, according to the best directions he was able to give them, but, as may easily be imagined, there was a something wanting; and the deficiency made his appearance grotesque and ludicrous to the last degree. It is a well known fact that we can better bear to be laughed at for those things we had no power to avoid, or which we have an inward conviction are right, than for those that have their origin in ourselves, and are the result of our own weakness or folly. Ellison was no deviator from the general rule. He was mortified beyond endurance at Eloise's ridicule. He had hitherto borne all her jokes and caprices with a degree of magnanimity that would have done honor to a better cause. But he now stood swelling with offended pride, and at length recovering his speech, turned to Mrs. Deland, and saying, "he should have the pleasure of paying his respects to her another time," quitted the room. In a few minutes they heard his horses' feet gallopping off with the speed of one who was flying for his life.

Exceedingly mortified at the circumstance, both Mr. and Mrs. Deland gave their daughter a severe reprimand, and also charged Loraine with as handsome an apology as it was in their power to make. But though Ellison expressed his entire conviction that they were perfectly free from any intention of insulting him, it was not in his friend's power to induce him to visit the house again, and he very soon left the vicinity.

CHAPTER V.

Loraine's attentions to Mary continued unremitting. The pure and artless girl satisfied that the tie which was daily strengthening between her lover and herself was approved by her kind guardians, sought not to repress the sweet emotions which had sprung up in her breast, and given to life a zest unknown before. Still Loraine spoke not absolutely of love, though his every look and action told the delightful tale.

Eloise had evidently labored for some time under a great depression of spirits. Mary had found that at night, when her cousin had imagined her to be asleep, she had often started out of bed and paced the room as if in a state of great agitation. This depression of spirits which became every day more and more evident, was the cause of much uneasiness to her affectionate and anxious mother, who could not but suspect it arose from regret at having driven Ellison away. By degrees both her appetite and that fine bloom on her cheeks, which had hitherto contrasted so beautifully with the matchless whiteness of her skin, began gradually to fail. She complained frequently of fatigue, and would spend hours on the bed in listlessness and languor. When questioned respecting her feelings, she would not admit that she was even indisposed. If anything was said about applying for medical advice, she would rouse herself for a time, and, laughing at the idea of a physician being called in, place the whole thing in so ludicrous a light, that for a time she calmed the fears of her anxious friends. Her family was at last willing to believe that the appearances they had observed had arisen from some accidental causes that youth and a good constitution would soon evercome. Winter too was coming on, and her mother hoped much from the gaiety which that season brings with it to the inhabitants of the country. Loraine still continued in the neighborhood, and was, at all times, ready to take Mary and her cousin in his sleigh, whithersoever they wished to go. But the fond mother's hopes were far from being realized. Her beloved child still continued to droop, and became subject to long and deep swoons. She also began to make great objections to all plans of pleasure, even though she knew they were got up purely on her account.

"If I were convinced that it is regret for the loss of Ellison that weighs on her spirits," said Mrs. Deland, one day, after she and Mary had been in conversation a long time about her; "I would really consult with Loraine about the probability of bringing him back. Could you not, Mary, manage to draw the truth from her?"

"I have done everything in my power to win her confidence," returned Mary, with an expression of deep concern; "but though I used to think we had but one mind between us, hers seems now to be entirely locked up from me." And here the big tears trembled in Mary's eyes as she spoke. "That her disease is mental I am convinced," the gentle girl continued, as soon as she could sufficiently repress her agitation to speak with composure; "for I have frequently been awakened at night by the sighs. But when I turned to her and tried in the tenderest manner to prevail upon her to tell me the cause, she always put me off by ascribing her agitation to some troubled dream, or something of a similar kind; and was often even angry if I appeared to doubt."

"What is your candid opinion? Do you think Ellison has anything to do with her sickness?" asked Mrs. Deland, anxiously. "I should really be thankful could I believe he had."

"Indeed, my dear aunt," replied Mary, earnestly, "I dare not flatter either you or myself with such a hope; I believed till very lately that she repented having offended him; but a few evenings ago, when Louisa Laybourne and Julia Winfield were here, I happened to be out of the room awhile, and I heard the girls screaming and laughing so loud that I was sure it must be Eloise that was amusing them; I hastened into the parlor and found her entertaining them with a ludicrous description of Ellison's looks when he came with his bare neck. I was convinced from that moment that whatever may be the cause of her unhappy state of spirits, he at least has nothing to do with it. She never could have held up to ridicule the man she loved!"

"No! certainly not! But this only makes the thing more distressing and perplexing. You must try, dearest Mary! as much as possible to win her confidence; and if it be possible for any one to do it, you surely can. The cause must be known before a remedy can be discovered; and unless that be speedily applied I see plainly that we shall have to make up our minds to behold her sink into her grave," and as she spoke, the anxious mother's tears flowed, whilst Mary's were mingled with them in the tenderest sympathy.

CHAPTER VI.

A FEW days after the conversation with which we concluded our last chapter, Mary happened to go unexpectedly, and at the same time so softly into their chamber, that Eloise, who at the time was indulging in a passionate flood of tears, was unconscious of her entrance. She was kneeling at the side of the bed, with her face hid in the bed clothes. Mary stood and viewed her with perfect astonishment, and as she did so Eloise raised her head in an attitude of devotion. "Oh! my God!" she exclaimed, "have mercy on thy weak and erring creature, and either remove me from this bitter trial, or give me strength to bear it. Oh! save me!—save me from what I am too weak, too selfish to bear!" And again her head rested on her couch, and her tears flowed in torrents. Mary, completely overcome by her agitation and evident misery, sunk down by her side and mingled her tears with those of the unhappy girl. Eloise at first started as she felt her cousin's arm passed gently over her neck, but soon giving way to the soft impulse by which Mary drew her toward her, she rested her head on the bosom of her sympathizing friend and sobbed aloud. Mary, as the violence of Eloise's grief began to subside, said in her soft, sweet voice, "dear Eloise! will you not tell me what is the cause of this distress?"

"Is it possible that you need to be told?" asked the weeping girl, raising her eyes as she spoke, and fixing them with an inquiring gaze on Mary's face.

"Indeed I am totally at a loss to form a conjecture," was Mary's reply, given in a tone that could not fail to carry conviction along with it.

"Then I have not exposed myself as much as I imagined. Oh!" she added, raising her eyes to Heaven as she spoke, "that I might be removed before I become too weak, too enervated to keep my secret locked in my own bosom."

"Repose in mine, beloved Eloise. Are we not sisters? Have we not always been united by ties of affection, closer than the generality of sisters feel? And can you not trust me now? Have I ever deceived, ever forsaken you?"

"Oh! no, no!" cried Eloise, throwing her arms round the neck of her cousin. "You have ever been the kindest, the best of sisters, and the most perfect of human beings."

"Then will you not trust me? Will you not allow me the comfort of at least smypathizing in your sorrows, if I cannot have the happiness of relieving them."

"Is it possible that you need to be told?" again asked Eloise, with an expression of doubt.

"Indeed I am unable to imagine the cause of your distress, for you appear to me to be surrounded with everything that heart could desire. A home that is fitted to satisfy the wishes of any reasonable mind; excellent and devoted parents; affectionate friends and numberless admirers. What else can be required to constitute the happiness of any rational being?"

"Oh! Mary! Is it possible that you, who possess the heart of Charles Loraine, can ask what else is required?" A soft and beautiful blush overspread Mary's lovely and ingenuous countenance, and for an instant she was silent. She then said—

"I will not pretend to say that it is not sweet to love and be beloved, but can a girl like you, so young, so beautiful, so full of talent, be in any doubt of that happiness being in store for you? The only fear, dear Eloise! is, that though your heart is warm, your fancy is too fastidious. Even Charles Loraine himself, had he presumed to your affections, would have been received with the same scorn, and have been driven off with the same contempt that his poor friend met with."

"Oh! no! I would have knelt down in thankfulness to the Almighty for having awarded me such a treasure! I could have worshipped at his feet, or have laid down my life to show the fulness of my gratitude for the rich gift of his love! But such happiness was too great to be mine. I do not envy you, Mary!—oh! believe me, I do not envy you," and as she spoke she clasped her hands and raised her full blue eyes, as if calling upon Heaven to witness the truth of what she said, "but my constant prayer, night and day, is to be allowed to sink into the grave before you become his wife!"

Mary was thunderstruck! Sick and almost fainting, she laid her head upon the bed beside which she still knelt, and the big sighs swelled her breast almost to bursting. How long she remained in that state we will not pretend to say, but at length raising her fine eyes with a mingled expression of magnanimity, piety and sensibility, she breathed inwardly the words—"Heavenly Father! support me!" and then turning to her cousin, "be comforted, dearest Eloise," said she, "for you will never see me the wife of Charles Loraine."

Eloise fixed her eyes upon her face as if doubtful that she had heard her right, and at length said—

"Mary, even your tenderness for me will not sanction your breaking a solemn engagement."

"I am under no engagement as yet," replied Mary, "and believe me, Eloise, I should seek in vain for happiness if I sacrificed yours in the pursuit."

"Oh! Mary how little have I deserved this generosity. I who have pined over the thought of your happiness as if it were a corrosive poison gnawing at my very vitals. I hate myself when I think of my selfishness, and yet I have struggled against it; indeed, Mary, if you knew how I have struggled you would pity, even whilst you condemn me." And here Eloise's tears flowed in torrents as her head sunk upon the shoulder of her cousin.

"I know you have struggled hard, dear Eloise," said Mary, with as much tenderness in her tone and manner as if her cousin were aiding instead of interfering with her happiness. "I know you have, for I have seen daily the efforts you were making to overcome something, though I knew not what."

"I saw Charles Loraine," continued Eloise, "before you saw him; for he made his first entrance the night we met him at Mr. Laybourne's into the room where we were dancing, and was immediately introduced to me. I at once saw in his eye that expression of admiration that a young female so easily understands, and I flattered myself that I had touched his heart as powerfully as I at once felt he had impressed my own. He saw you, however, and my doom was fixed. I was conscious in myself of emotions that were not only new to me, and of a nature not to be overcome; but I saw that the same impression was made on your mind, for your eyes told a tale they had never before spoken. Oh! the philosopher may treat with contempt, and the matron with ridicule, the idea of first impressions ever being so powerful, but I know by fatal experience that they are capable of producing an effect which, with any mind less properly regulated than yours, Mary, might engender even madness itself! For some time I struggled with tolerable success against my disappointment, for, strange as it may sound, a disappointment it was. And here let me solemnly declare in justification of myself, that never either at that time, or at any future period, did any feelings of envy or unkindness toward you as the cause of my sufferings, gain an entrance into my breast. As long as Ellison continued to come, I diverted my mind by playing with his feelings; but after he was gone, I was thrown entirely upon myself, and saw night after night Charles and you enjoying all the luxury of mutual love. Oh! Mary! think not too hardly of me when I say it—but it preyed upon my heart like a canker worm. It was a sight forever present before my eyes by day; and at night when we laid our heads on our pillows, and you were in a few minutes sunk in the sweet sleep, which virtue and purity such as yours can seldom fail to find, I was tossing about in feverish excitement, sometimes recalling the look of fond admiration with which I had seen Charles gazing upon you, and at others anticipating the time when he would bear you away to his native land as the wife of his bosom. It was at such moments as those, Mary! that I so frequently awoke you with my agitation. Oh! the frightful ideas that would sometimes come into my mind against myself—I hope my God, who knows that though I am weak, I am never deliberately wicked, will in His mercy pardon them."

After Eloise had ceased speaking, Mary sat for a considerable time, wrapt in deep and melancholy thought. At length she raised her eyes to her cousin's face, and said in a gentle, but solemn voice,

"Eloise, you shall no longer have to fear me as a rival. But still remember, that on yourself chiefly depends the restoration of your peace of mind. Without a humble and pious submission to the will of God all else will be unavailing."

Mary now rose, and was preparing to leave the room; but Eloise, who still remained in a kneeling position, clasped her arms around her knees, and exclaimed—"do not leave me, Mary! till you have said you forgive me for the misery I have inflicted upon you! Oh! say that you at least do not hate me!"

"Hate you, Eloise!" cried Mary, in a voice of the sweetest tenderness, and pressing her lips on the forehead of her cousin as she spoke. "Such a feeling never had entrance into my bosom. Oh! how could I dare to raise my eyes to Heaven and ask for mercy for myself if I refused it to you?"

(TO BE CONCLUDED.)

THE FOREST HOME.

BY MRS. HUGHES, AUTHOR OF "ORNAMENTS DISCOVERED," "AUNT MARY'S TALES," &C. &C.

CONCLUDED FROM PAGE 137.

CHAPTER VII.

MARY, after leaving her sister, hurried to her chamber, where she cast herself prostrate in an agony of mental torture. Long she lay before she attained any thing like composure in her feelings, or coherency in her thought. The idea that she had voluntarily, and without any fault of his, abandoned Loraine, sometimes drove her almost to delirium. Frequently she was on the point of returning to Eloise, telling her she found it impossible to comply with the promise she had given, and urging her with all the persuasiveness of which she was mistress, to exert the energy so natural to her character, to overcome her unfortunate prepossession, and not doom two beings whom she loved to such unspeakable misery. But then, again, the conviction that Eloise's life was in actual danger, and the idea of allowing the friend and companion whom she had loved from her earliest infancy, to sink into the grave from which she might rescue her, repressed the selfish yearnings of her heart, and again she determined to persevere in her first resolution. Besides, though she had the utmost confidence in Loraine's affection, and had never entertained a doubt, should she become his, of that affection remaining firm and unwavering, yet when convinced that all hope was vain, and that she could never bear any closer affinity to him than that of a friend, she could not suppose he would be so unlike men in general, as not soon to find some other object on whom to bestow his noble heart; and it was even possible that some little pique at the seeming inconsistency of her conduct might assist him in the transfer. But such is the weakness and waywardness of our nature, that the idea of his giving to another the affection that had been the pride and delight of her own heart, was an agony almost too great for her to bear.

One painful and imperative duty, however, still pressed heavily on her heart. She would feel herself deeply chargeable if Loraine were allowed to remain any longer than absolutely necessary, in the indulgence of hopes that were never to be realized; but how the task of divesting him of them was to be accomplished, she could not see. The duty, however, was to be performed, and trusting to being enabled to perform it in a befitting manner when the proper time arrived, she made a strong effort to compose herself, and rising prepared for going down stairs. She braided her hair, and then dressing with the greatest simplicity, proceeded to the library, which was the room in which the family most commonly met. On entering it, she found Eloise extended on a settee, and her anxious mother seated by her side, Mrs. Deland told Mary in a whisper that the invalid had been seized almost immediately on coming down stairs, with one of those deep swoons to which she had of late been so subject, and was only just recovering from it. Mary bent over the sufferer with a look of tender sympathy, and though something whispered her that the relief she had offered was too late, she could not but rejoice that she had made the sacrifice. As she was thus watching, a servant came to say that Mr. Loraine was in the parlor. Eloise, on hearing his name, cast her eyes around to see where her mother was, and finding that she had, at that moment, gone to the other part of the room, she said in a soft whisper—

"You will not betray me, Mary?"

"How could you imagine such a thing?" returned Mary, with the utmost tenderness, and stooping she kissed her cold forehead.

"Mary! dear!" said Mrs. Deland, "you must have Loraine all to yourself, for the present, and I suppose," she added, with a faint smile, "you will be found sufficient for the purpose of entertaining him. Go to him, my daughter!" she added, in a more serious tone, as the anxiety of the mother revived on her turning her eyes again on her almost inanimate child, "and excuse my non-appearance by telling him of Eloise's sickness; and indeed I believe he will think the messenger is not much better herself. My poor child!" she continued, as she looked at Mary's almost colorless face, "I am afraid my anxiety about Eloise has made me inexcusably careless about you, for I did not till this moment notice that you look as if you had just risen from a bed of sickness."

Mary endeavored by making an effort to speak in a cheerful tone, to allay her aunt's fears respecting herself, and then proceeded with trembling steps and beating heart to the parlor. Loraine rose as she entered, and the moment he cast his eyes on her face he darted forward, and taking her hand in both his, inquired in a tone of the most touching tenderness if she were ill.

Mary with great truth attributed her agitation to Eloise's distressing state.

"It is undoubtedly," said the young man, "a melancholy thing to see an amiable and beautiful young creature sinking into the grave, as she is evidently doing; but remember, dearest Mary, that your own health is of infinite value, and must be taken care of. It is not all your own property, you know," he continued, smiling as he led her to a seat and placed himself close by her side; "and, therefore, you have no right to sport with it." He then observing the

state of nervous irritability that she was in, deemed it best to endeavor to lead her mind from the cause, be it what it might, and with all the tender wiles of love he sought to win her from herself by a variety of anecdotes. Among the rest he was led by some accidental circumstance, to describe the ceremony he had witnessed in Italy of a young lady taking the veil; and added after he had done, "it was so painful a sight to behold a young creature in the very morning of life thus entomb herself, that it actually made me feel melancholy for two or three days after."

"I would give the world could I feel a vocation to follow her example," said Mary, with a deep sigh.

"The vocation, dearest Mary! which I trust you have received," said the lover, in a tone of soothing tenderness, "whilst it is more consistent with the energy and activity of your character, is not, I trust, less favorable to the cause of piety and virtue."

"I do not," returned the pale and trembling girl, "entirely accord with you."

The lover fixed his eyes on her face with a look of painful investigation, but seeing nothing in her countenance short of the most intense earnestness and soul touching distress, he exclaimed in a voice of agitation, "Mary! what am I to understand by this language? I have never yet uttered the words 'I love' to you, or any woman living, because I had a sort of implied engagement with my mother, before I left home, that I would wait till I had, at least, six month's acquaintance with the object of my choice before I addressed such words to her; but I have in a thousand ways told you how infinitely dear you were to my heart. Yes! Mary! you must have long ago seen in my every look, and in every action, how entirely my soul is locked up in you, and yet you never gave me any reason to suppose that my devotion was displeasing to you. How then, best beloved of my heart! can you reconcile your present language with all that has passed? I am sure it is impossible that you can ever condescend to act the part of a coquette!"

Poor Mary sat in a state of the most agonizing distress. She knew that all he had said was perfectly true, and that he had a right to accuse her of the most flagrant and cruel injustice; and yet it was impossible for her to give any explanation of the cause of this seemingly shameful conduct. Trembling to such a degree that she could scarcely support herself on her seat, she remained silent, with her eyes fixed on the floor. At length Loraine, taking her passive hand and pressing it to his lips with fervor, said—

"My confidence in your purity and virtue, my own best beloved; nay, more, my belief in the noble integrity of your mind is such that I am persuaded it must be some idea of making a pious sacrifice that impels your present conduct; but remember, my Mary, that no service can be acceptable to God which involves a dereliction of principle, or a disregard of the duties we owe to our fellow creatures! Let me entreat you, therefore, to examine well the reasons you have for acting as you seem now disposed to do! Surely Mr. and Mrs. Deland could not have required such a sacrifice from you!"

"Oh! no! no!" cried Mary, with energy. "They are unconscious of my intention, and must if possible ever remain ignorant of the motive."

"What then is it? Surely, my beloved, you will not deny me the trifling gratification of knowing what the power is to which I am expected to yield?"

"I cannot! dare not tell! And if you love me as you say you do; if one throb of humanity ever entered your bosom, cease, I entreat you, to urge me any further!" and as she spoke she raised to his face her beautiful eyes, from which the tears were streaming.

"But can you expect me," expostulated the lover, "to resign the dearest hopes that ever filled my breast without an effort to retain them? Can you imagine that I could give up a nearer view of Heaven than I had ever dreamed of earth's being able to afford, without struggling to hold the possession? Let me know the power to which I am expected to submit, and I promise you, solemnly, that if I find you have not been carried away with an overstrained conception of duty, I will yield with the same humble submission which you are yourself exercising."

"Oh! It is impossible! I am bound by a solemn promise, and all that I can do is to beg that you will forget me."

"Forget you, Mary!" exclaimed Loraine, with energy. "As well might you ask me to live without breathing, or to see after my eyes had been plucked out, as ask me to cease to love you. No! Mary! you are so closely woven with all the strings of life, that I can only cease to love when I cease to exist. Give me, then, at least the pledge that you will not bind yourself by any promise which would separate us forever, for the next six months, and I will endeavor to be satisfied."

"Alas!" replied Mary, in a voice of heart-broken sadness, "it is too late! I have already given the promise, and never can be yours!"

Loraine, who had risen in the excitement of feeling, turned as pale as death, tottered a few steps, and but for being near the mantel-piece, of which he caught hold, would undoubtedly have fallen. Mary on hearing the sound of his tottering steps raised her drooping head, and seeing the state he was in, flew to him.

"Dear Loraine!" she exclaimed, as she put her arm within his, and looked up in his face with all the tenderness and affection of her nature; "compose yourself, I entreat you! For my sake compose yourself! For, believe me, the burden I have to bear is already too heavy for my strength; and needs not the additional misery of seeing you suffer thus!" Making an effort to recover himself, the lover looked at her with an expression of delight as these involuntary effusions of affection burst from her lips.

"Yes! my beloved one," he said, whilst his eyes rested on her in all the radiancy of delighted affection, "I will be all and everything you desire, only tell me that the promise you have given is not such as to bind you to another."

"Oh! no! never! never! will I belong to another! Since I cannot be yours, Loraine, my only prayer will be that I may be so far purified from the grosser passions of human nature as to be fit to devote myself

wholly to the service of God. And if such should ever be my happy state, and I am able to pray for you, Loraine"—but here her agitation completely overcame her power of utterance, and leaning her head against his arm she sobbed in agony.

"My Mary! my own best beloved! we shall yet be happy. God will not countenance the separating of two hearts so sweetly, so firmly united. This cruel bondage, be it what it will, He will break, I am sure He will, and I shall yet have the bliss of calling you mine." And as he spoke, he attempted to pass his arm around her waist that he might fold her to his heart. But the effort immediately aroused Mary to her recollection, and disengaging herself from him, she re-seated herself with a look of composure and dignity that he at once wondered at and admired.

"This agitating conversation," she said, after a short pause, "is painful and injurious to us both; and the sooner it is terminated the better. Indeed I must beg that you will go," she continued, pressing her hand upon her head as she spoke, "for I feel unable to support myself any longer."

"I will go, my beloved," he said, "but this must not be the last time of my seeing you. A vow so suddenly extorted, and so hastily given as this must have been, (for last night when I left you your spirits appeared as light, and your mind as disengaged as usual) must not be yielded to without investigation. I cannot resign all my hopes of happiness without inquiring into the necessity. I must consult Mr. Deland upon——"

"Oh! no," interrupted Mary, clasping her hands together, and holding them up in a supplicating attitude. "If you have any care for my future peace of mind, let me entreat you not to mention it to him, or any one. Promise me this, Loraine, or you know not how miserable you will make me."

"I do promise you, my sweet one," returned he, struck with pity at the look and tone of alarm with which she spoke. "But say that I shall see you again. And if your resolution still remains the same, that I shall at least have the satisfaction of receiving my fiat from your own lips. Till then I shall still hope your vow may be revoked, and I be made happy."

"It is registered in Heaven!" said Mary, solemnly, "and my fate is sealed! Farewell then, dear Loraine," she continued, with dignity. "Pray for me, that I may become pure enough to be worthy of the vocation I aspire to; and let me hear soon that you are happy." As she spoke, she held out her hand, which the young man was about to take, but impelled by an impulse which he could not restrain, he folded her in his arms, pressed her fondly to his heart, and imprinted a kiss for the first time in his life on her pure but colorless lips.

"Farewell! thou most perfect, most beloved of beings. Farewell till we meet again." And releasing her from his arms, he rushed out of the room.

"Oh! farewell forever!" cried Mary, and sinking on a chair, she covered her face with her hands and sobbed aloud. The state of agitation, however, that she had been in for so large a portion of the day, had so exhausted her that even this natural vent to her feelings soon dried up, and being exceedingly faint and anxious, at the same time to avoid observation, she retired to her chamber, where, after reposing for an hour or two, and again offering up her supplications for fortitude and resignation, she succeeded in regaining such a degree of composure as enabled her to rejoin the family without increasing the anxiety of her kind friends, by any additional alarm on her account.

CHAPTER VIII.

On returning to the library, Mary found Eloise still lying much in the same state, and learned that her situation had given so much alarm to her parents, that unknown to her they had sent off for the physician. His arrival seemed to agitate and distress the invalid exceedingly, and it was with difficulty that her mother could prevail upon her to answer any of his questions. As he was the friend, however, as well as the physician of the family, he remained some hours, and whilst apparently engaged in conversation with the others, took opportunities of watching his patient when off her guard, and at length having satisfied himself with respect to her condition, he rose to go. Mr. and Mrs. Deland both followed him to the door, when he declared it to be his decided opinion that the seat of her disease was in the mind, and recommended travelling as soon as the season would permit, as the most likely means of restoring her health. Fully approving of the prescribed cure, though not believing in the supposed cause, the anxious parents returned to the library; when the father, bending over his daughter, said, with his usual gentle playfulness, "Eloise, the doctor ascribes your sickness to disappointment at Ellison's departure."

"And let him. He is welcome," said the invalid, languidly.

"Well, take care of yourself, my sweet, little daughter," said the kind father, as he stroked the luxuriant flaxen ringlets from the marble brow of his beloved child, "and do not break your heart because that self-willed man would not stay to be laughed at; and, as soon as fine weather comes, we will go and take a long journey. Perhaps we may even visit that far-famed country which this strange man comes from."

"I shall see a much better country before that time," replied the daughter. Mary looked at Eloise and wondered how she could thus distress her father, who immediately made an excuse for leaving the room to hide, as Mary was well assured, the agitation she had excited. This wonder was the greater as she was convinced from all that had passed, that the invalid did not really believe herself to be in danger, nay, that she even flattered herself that if Loraine were once divested of all hope of Mary's ever being his, a revival of the preference which she believed be had once bestowed upon her would be the natural consequence, and in the generosity of her heart, Mary determined that she would never in any way be the means of obstructing such a consummation.

From this time little occurred to disturb the quiet monotony of their lives. Loraine had for a week or

two written almost daily to Mary, using every argument that affection could prompt to induce her to change her resolution; and when he failed in this to beg to be permitted another interview before he left the country, as it was his intention shortly to do. But she pleaded so pathetically to be spared the trial, and represented so strongly the ineffectualness of such a meeting, that he generously gave up his own wishes for the sake of sparing the feelings of the being he so fondly loved. The change which had taken place between these young people of course had not passed unobserved by Mr. and Mrs. Deland, but such was their confidence in the prudence and right feeling of this beloved child of their adoption, that they determined not to distress her with questions as long as she remained silent on the subject; so that when a note came to Mrs. Deland from Loraine, taking leave of herself and the rest of the family, and thanking them in the handsomest manner for their kindness, she simply expressed her regret for his loss, but without saying anything that seemed to call for an explanation. Still, however, she could not divest herself of the suspicion that Mary had acted precipitately in consequence, perhaps of some little pique, and thus been guilty of an act of injustice, which would ere long bring with it the bitter pangs of repentance, which to a mind so acutely sensitive would, she feared, destroy the springs and energies of life. And indeed it would have been difficult for a stranger to determine which of these lovely beings was likely to be the first to repose in her place of rest, for though Mary still moved about, and zealously shared with her aunt the office of nurse to Eloise, the color had almost entirely forsaken her cheeks, her form was rapidly wasting, and the step which had so lately been all lightness and elasticity, was now slow and languid; whilst the sweet music of her voice was scarcely ever heard. In vain for her did the days begin to lengthen, and the light green of the maple and the willow put forth. No longer did she notice the tulip shaped buds of the hickory, welcome the green bulbs of the daffodil, or hail the little blue birds that came to speak to them of spring. Spring, the approach of which she had been wont to watch with so much delight. Spring, the season of flowers, those sweet personifications of every beautiful idea, had now no charms for her. Eloise was fast sinking into a youthful tomb, and though Mary never could regret the effort she had made to save her, she felt that her all of earthly happiness had been sacrificed in vain. Her aunt and uncle, with a sort of tacit acknowledgment that the thing was hopeless, had ceased to speak of travelling, and had, contrary to their previous intentions, sent for Adelaide from school; while Theodore, who had been for the last few months on business for his father in the South, was urged to hasten home. All these things Mary looked upon as certain indications that they considered Eloise's life drawing near to a close; but to the young invalid herself they only appeared as natural preparations for the absence from home that had been so long contemplated; and though she was now too weak to sit up in a chair unsupported, she still talked of getting well as the weather became warmer, nor ever even to Mary spoke of death, or her wish to die, as she had formerly done. Indeed she astonished Mary exceedingly, one day, by asking if she knew whether Loraine were still in England, and whether she thought it probable that they would see him should they visit that country. Mary felt surprised, and even shocked at the state of mind that these questions evinced; but ever kind and considerate, she attributed it to the weakness of disease, and pitied instead of blaming the sufferer.

Mr. Deland one day entered the library where his wife, Mary and Adelaide were all seated around the couch of the invalid. "I have," said that parent, "just received a very important epistle, and as it is a general concern I will read it aloud." But to make the intelligence understood, we must premise a short explanation. Mrs. Deland's father, and of course Mary's grandfather, had been a very rich planter in St. Domingo, before the revolt of the blacks in that country, and had several years previous to the period of which we are speaking, authorized a gentleman fully qualified for the business, to see after the recovery of the claims he had on the French government, in consequence of the immense losses he had sustained by the revolution; and the letter which Mr. Deland read was from that gentleman, saying that the money was received, and he only waited for instructions to forward it.

"Let us all go to Paris together to get it!" cried Eloise, with as much animation as though she were in the hey day of health and vigor. "And as expense will not now be an object of so much consideration, Adelaide too can be of the party. Hurry ma and Mary, to get ready, and I will hurry to get well. You two heiresses will really have a delightful errand to Paris, to go and receive your fortunes." As she spoke, she turned to those she addressed with a look of surprise at their silence, and was struck at the sight of the big tears that trembled in the eyes of each, while Adelaide cast her eyes on the floor as if at a loss how to look. There are times when the mind remains abtusely insensible to the most self-evident truths, and others again when trifles light as air in an instant strike conviction to the heart. And thus it was with the dying girl. In a moment the book of fate was opened before her, and she read her own approaching death in clear and legible characters.

A scream escaped her as the reality of her situation presented itself to her mind, and she covered her face with her thin, white hands, as if to shut out the frightful truth. Her father, unable to encounter the painful scene, had left the room; and Adelaide, anxious at all times to act the comforter to her almost idolized parent, had immediately followed him; whilst as if by one impulse Mrs. Deland and Mary sunk on their knees by the side of the couch. Long and earnestly did they pray for the poor sufferer; and when at length in compliance with her request they arose, they found her countenance composed, but a dark and settled gloom pervaded her every feature. From that time she scarcely ever spoke to any one, further than to answer any question that was put to her respecting her personal wants. This state of mind was exceedingly distressing to all, but especially to her gentle, amiable and truly pious mother, for in spite of all her

maternal fondness, she could see nothing in it but the frowardness of a spoiled child; which, though obliged to submit, was too wayward to do so without grumbling at that which it could not resist. And such had ever been Eloise's disposition. She had never learned to discipline her mind to the pious duty of submission. All her excellence lay in the possession of those qualities which gave her such dominion over those around her, that they were willing to be led by her, so that she, perhaps, unknown to either herself or Mary, had been a powerful instrument in the hand of Providence in the formation of that perfect pattern of humility and gentleness that her cousin had ever exhibited. For a considerable time Mr. and Mrs. Deland watched with great anxiety to see their beloved invalid discover some signs of wishing for the services of a clergyman, and had often consulted together on the duty of proposing to her to send for one; but as often parental tenderness shrunk from the idea of distressing and agitating her. They were, however, very much relieved by the arrival of Theodore, for whom Eloise had always evinced a great partiality, as well as a degree of deference that she but seldom discovered for any other person. And it was with unspeakable delight that they saw, after he had been at home a few days, and had devoted himself as he did most unremittingly to the comfort and support of his dying sister, that a gradual change evidently took place in her countenance and manner. At first affection, unassisted by religion, might have hesitated in pronouncing the alteration to be for the better, for she only became agitated and restless instead of gloomy and composed; but the parents knew the human heart too well not to see in that uneasiness the awakening of conscience, the only sure preparation for penitence and pardon; nor was it long before their suspicions were confirmed by Theodore's requesting his father to send for a clergyman. Though there was not one within several miles of them, he obeyed the summons in an incredibly short time. He spent several hours with the dying girl, and when at length he took his leave, he left her calm, placid and resigned. No cloud now rested on her lovely countenance, she trusted she had made her peace with her Maker, and was consequently at peace herself, and with all the world. As if Providence had kindly spared her till Theodore's return, that her parents might have all their children to support and comfort them, she gently breathed her last, whilst her brother and Mary, who were both sitting beside her at the time, believed she was yet sleeping.

CHAPTER IX.

Eight months had passed over since the young and beautiful Eloise had been laid in her peaceful grave, over which the lily, the province rose, and the exquisitely pure japonica had each bloomed in succession, under the watchful care of Mary and Adelaide, and had each in their turn withered and died like her beneath them. Even the white cluster rose, which seemed for a long time determined to resist the howling storms of winter, and had clung to the white marble stone that stood at the head of the grave, as if in imitation of the hope of the Christian, had been at last obliged to give way, and a sheet of snow, cold and white as she it enshrouded, had long covered the spot where they had been. The first bitter tears had given way to a soft and not unpleasing sadness. The father's manly spirit had again revived, and the mother's sweet and gentle nature had again begun to find relief in her duties and her religion. Adelaide had returned to school; and Theodore, whose grief for the death of a sister, who had ever marked him with distinguished tenderness, had again began occasionally to mix amongst his young companions. The money from France had been received, which, however, Mary would gladly have declined taking any of, though the sum was sufficient to place her not only in a state of independence but of affluence, had not her uncle positively insisted upon its being properly invested in her own name, and at her own disposal. The death of Eloise had been deeply felt by Mary, for they had been so closely united during the whole of their lives, that when deprived of her it had seemed as though she had lost a part of herself; and as from this, and her other cause of deep rooted sorrow, her health continued rapidly to decline, her kind friends began to be seriously apprehensive that it would not be very long before she again rested by the side of her who had been her companion through life. On her account, therefore, they once more began to talk of travelling as soon as the spring should unfold its flowery breast to be fanned by soft breezes. Mary, however, invariably objected to the proposition, declaring that her only wish was to remain as much as possible in the quiet seclusion of home. Earnestly had she prayed to be enabled to regard him, who had so long possessed her whole heart, in the light only of a brother; but in vain, for her heart was as fondly and devotedly engrossed by the same object as ever. She was one day sitting alone, for Mr. and Mrs. Deland were gone to pay a visit of sympathy to an old friend, who had, like themselves, deposited a beloved child in the grave, when she was aroused from the melancholy musings in which she had been long engrossed, by the sound of sleigh bells. Expecting to see her aunt and uncle, though surprised at their early return, she went to the window and caught a slight glance of a gentleman in deep mourning, crossing the piazza and about to enter the front door. A certain alertness in the step convinced her it was not her uncle, and her next thought was to escape to her chamber to avoid the sight of a stranger; but before she had time to do this the parlor door opened, and she beheld Loraine.

The suddenness of the surprise, we might almost say shock, united to the weak state of her bodily frame, was too much for her, and she sunk instantly in a state of insensibility on the floor. She had lain in that situation for a considerable time, when gradually sounds, sweet as the voices of angels, seemed to be floating in the air and falling softly on her ear, and by degrees she distinguished the words, "Mary, my beloved! My adored Mary! open those beautiful eyes, and let me see that you live!" Scarcely knowing whether all was not a dream, Mary attempted to raise her head from the sofa on which Loraine had

placed her, and to look around. In a moment the lover in a transport of joy clasped her in his arms. "My love! my wife!" he exclaimed, as he held her passionately to his heart, "say that you forgive the pain I have caused you, and that you are now well and as happy as your devoted lover!" Mary, now fully restored to consciousness, disengaging herself from his embrace, walked with an air of offended dignity to a chair at some little distance, and sat down in silence. Loraine stood for an instant, transfixed and stupefied; but the unequivocal proof that he had just had of his power over her heart, happily came to his recollection, and drawing a chair gently to her side, he said, "can you wonder, my beloved! that my delight at once more seeing you, should have driven me a little beyond the bounds of mere etiquette?"

"You seem to have forgotten," returned Mary, both speaking and looking with chilling coldness; "that the barrier which exists between us, makes this language altogether improper."

"I am not come without my credentials, Mary!" he replied, with mildness, but not without an air of offended feeling. "I have a letter here," and as he spoke, he took one from his pocket, "written with a dying hand, by one whom I mourn as sincerely as ever brother mourned a beloved sister. Read it, Mary! and you will see that I have not acted from mere head-strong impetuosity." Mary took the letter, and as well as her agitation would permit, she read the following:—

"To Charles Loraine, Esq.

"The near approach of death, which calls for a strict self-examination, has at length made me sensible of my cruelty and injustice toward one of the noblest and loveliest of human beings. Loraine I am dying, and before we meet again I shall have risen above the little feelings of humanity, which would blush at the acknowledgment I am now about to make, even though it were to perform an act of duty, and to make restitution to the injured. I have loved you, Loraine! Since the first evening we met you have had entire possession of my heart; and never having been in the habit of practising the difficult task of submitting, the fatal passion soon acquired an uncontrollable power over my mind. I struggled, but, alas! my struggle was not to subdue, but merely to conceal, and when at last Mary became acquainted with the nature of the poison that lay at my heart, and generously offered to resign all her fond hopes of happiness for my sake, I was so wicked, so selfish, so unprincipled as to accept the sacrifice, in the vain and foolish hope that when convinced you could never possess her, you might turn your thoughts toward me. The result was what might have been expected, and what I deserved: and I now thank my God that he did not grant success to my plans, and thus lead me on, step by step, to a deeper and darker course of sin. Mary has ever since been the affectionate friend, the tender nurse, and the uncomplaining sufferer; her heart, I can see by her pale cheek and wasted form, is still yours, and I trust she will be rewarded for all she has endured, by that sweet union which two such hearts are alone calculated to secure.

"Farewell, Loraine! Forgive and pray for me; and if the departed have the power of watching over those who still remain behind, you and she whom you so fondly love, will ever be the objects of the tenderest care of Eloise.

"Theodore will forward this letter to you as soon as the last sigh has escaped my bosom."

When Mary had finished reading this letter, she put her handkerchief to her eyes, and gave vent to a violent gush of tears. Loraine left her for a time to indulge this natural burst of feeling; but as her emotion began to subside, he said with tenderness, "you see, dearest, I have not acted without authority; and there is now nothing to oppose my calling you mine."

But before Mary had time to reply, her uncle and aunt returned from their ride. A succession of surprises, however, seemed to await the agitated girl this morning, for instead of expressing astonishment at the sight of Loraine, they received him as one who had been much longer in coming than they had expected; and she soon learned that Theodore had, at his sister's request, shown her letter to his parents after her death, and that Mr. Deland had received a subsequent letter from Loraine, saying it was his intention to be with them in the course of a few weeks; but her relatives with their usual consideration had avoided giving Mary any intimation of these things, from a conviction that it would be more agreeable to her feelings to receive them from her lover himself. And not a little had they congratulated themselves on the course they had pursued, as the long time he was in making his appearance had begun to raise an alarm in their minds, even for his life itself. Two successive shipwrecks had indeed put that life in no small danger; but now he was come, and it is scarcely necessary for us to add, that after a proper time had elapsed, he was united to his beloved Mary.

"MY FORTUNE'S MADE!"

BY MARY ALEXINA SMITH.

My young friend, Cora Lee, was a gay, dashing girl, fond of dress, and looking always as if, to use a common saying, just out of a band box. Cora was a belle, of course, and had many admirers. Among the number of these, was a young man named Edward Douglass, who was the very "pink" of neatness, in all matters pertaining to dress, and exceeding particular in his observance of the little proprieties of life.

I saw, from the first, that if Douglass pressed his suit, Cora's heart would be an easy conquest; and so it proved.

"How admirably they are fitted for each other," I remarked to my husband, on the night of the wedding. "Their tastes are similar, and their habits so much alike, that no violence will be done to the feelings of either, in the more intimate associations that marriage brings. Both are neat in person and orderly by instinct; and both have good principles."

"From all present appearances, the match will be a good one," replied my husband. There was, I thought, something like reservation in his tone.

"Do you really think so?" I said, a little ironically; for Mr. Smith's approval of the marriage was hardly warm enough to suit my fancy.

"Oh, certainly! Why not?" he replied.

I felt a little fretted at my husband's mode of speaking; but made no further remark on the subject. He is never very enthusiastic, nor sanguine; and did not mean, in this instance, to doubt the fitness of the parties for happiness in the marriage state, as I half imagined. For myself, I warmly approved my friend's choice, and called her husband a lucky man to secure for his companion through life, a woman so admirably fitted to make one like him happy. But a visit which I paid to Cora, one day, about six weeks after the honey-moon had expired, lessened my enthusiasm on the subject, and awoke some unpleasant doubts. It happened that I called soon after breakfast. Cora met me in the parlor, looking like a very fright. She wore a soiled and rumpled morning wrapper; her hair was in papers; and she had on dirty stockings, and a pair of old slippers down at the heels.

"Bless me, Cora!" said I. "What is the matter? Have you been sick?"

"No. Why do you ask? Is my dishabille rather on the extreme?"

"Candidly, I think it is, Cora," was my frank answer.

"Oh, well! No matter," she carelessly replied, "my fortune's made."

"I don't clearly understand you," said I.

"I'm married, you know."

"Yes; I am aware of that fact."

"No need of being so particular in dress now."

"Why not?"

"Didn't I just say?" replied Cora. "My fortune's made. I've got a husband."

Beneath an air of jesting, was apparent the real earnestness of my friend.

"You dressed with a careful regard to taste and neatness in order to win Edward's love?" said I.

"Certainly I did."

"And should you not do the same in order to retain it?"

"Why, Mrs. Smith! Do you think my husband's affection goes no deeper than my dress? I should be very sorry indeed to think that. He loves me for myself."

"No doubt of that in the world, Cora. But remember, that he cannot see what is in your mind except by what you do or say. If he admires your taste, for instance, it is not from any abstract appreciation of it, but because the taste manifests itself in what you do And, depend upon it, he will find it a very hard matter to approve and admire your correct taste in dress, for instance, when you appear before him, day after day in your present unattractive attire. If you do not dress well for your husband's eyes, for whose eyes, pray do you dress? You are as neat when abroad, as you were before your marriage."

"As to that, Mrs. Smith, common decency requires me to dress well when I go upon the street, or into company; to say nothing of the pride one naturally feels in looking well."

"And does not the same common decency and natural pride argue as strongly in favor of your dressing well at home and for the eye of your husband, whose approval, and whose admiration must be dearer to you than the approval and admiration of the whole world?"

"But he doesn't want to see me rigged out in silks and satins all the time. A pretty bill my dress maker would have against him in that event. Edward has more sense than that, I flatter myself."

"Street or ball room attire is one thing, Cora; and becoming home apparel another. We look for both in their place."

Thus I argued with the thoughtless young wife, but my words made no impression. When abroad, she dressed with exquisite taste, and was lovely to look upon; but at home she was careless and slovenly, and made it almost impossible for those who saw her to realize that she was the brilliant beauty they had met in company but a short time before. But even this, did not last long. I noticed, after a few months, that the habits of home were confirming themselves, and becoming apparent abroad. Her fortune was made, and why should she now waste time, or employ her thoughts about matters of personal appearance

The habits of Mr. Douglass, on the contrary, did not change. He was as orderly as before; and dressed with the same regard to neatness. He never appeared at the breakfast table in the morning without being shaved: nor did he lounge about in the evening in his shirt sleeves. The slovenly habits into which Cora had fallen, annoyed him seriously; and still more so, when her carelessness about her appearance began to manifest itself abroad as well as at home. When he hinted any thing on the subject, she did not hesitate to reply, in a jesting manner, that her fortune was made, and she need not trouble herself any longer about how she looked.

Douglass did not feel very much complimented; but as he had his share of good sense, he saw that to assume a cold and offended manner would do no good.

"If your fortune is made, so is mine," he replied, on one occasion, quite coolly, and indifferently. Next morning he made his appearance at the breakfast table, with a beard of twenty-four hours' growth.

"You havn't shaved this morning, dear," said Cora, to whose eyes the dirty looking face of her husband was particularly unpleasant.

"No," he replied, carelessly. "It's a serious trouble to shave every day."

"But you look so much better with a cleanly shaved face."

"Looks are nothing—ease and comfort, everything," said Douglass.

"But common decency, Edward."

"I see nothing indecent in a long beard," replied the husband.

Still Cora argued, but in vain. Her husband went off to his business with his unshaven face.

"I don't know whether to shave or not," said Douglass, next morning, running over his rough face, upon which was a beard of forty-eight hours' growth. His wife had hastily thrown on a wrapper, and, with slip-shod feet, and head like a mop, was lounging in a large rocking chair awaiting the breakfast bell.

"For mercy's sake, Edward, don't go any longer with that shockingly dirty face," spoke up Cora. "If you knew how dreadfully you looked."

"Looks are nothing," replied Edward, stroking his beard.

"Why, what's come over you all at once?"

"Nothing, only it's such a trouble to shave every day."

"But you did'nt shave yesterday."

"I know; I am just as well off to-day, as if I had. So much saved at any rate."

But Cora urged the matter, and her husband finally yielded, and mowed down the luxuriant growth of beard.

"How much better you do look!" said the young wife. "Now don't go another day without shaving."

"But why should I take so much trouble about mere looks? I'm just as good with a long beard as with a short one. It's a great deal of trouble to shave every day. You can love me just as well; and why need I care about what others say or think?"

On the following morning, Douglass appeared not only with a long beard, but with a bosom and collar that were both soiled and rumpled.

"Why, Edward! How you do look!" said Cora. "You've neither shaved nor put on a clean shirt."

Edward stroked his face, and run his fingers along the edge of his collar, remarking, indifferently, as he did so.

"It's no matter· I look well enough. This being so very particular in dress, is waste of time; and I'm getting tired of it."

And in this trim Douglass went off to his business, much to the annoyance of his wife, who could not bear to see her husband looking so slovenly.

Gradually the declension from neatness went on, until Edward was quite a match for his wife, and yet, strange to say, Cora had not taken the hint, broad as it was. In her own person she was as untidy as ever.

About six months after their marriage, we invited a few friends to spend a social evening with us, Cora and her husband among the number. Cora came alone, quite early, and said that her husband was very much engaged and could not come until after tea. My young friend had not taken much pains with her attire. Indeed, her appearance mortified me, as it contrasted so decidedly with that of the other ladies who were present; and I could not help suggesting to her that she was wrong in being so indifferent about her dress. But she laughingly replied to me—

"You know my fortune's made now, Mrs. Smith. I can afford to be negligent in these matters. It's a great waste of time to dress so much."

I tried to argue against this, but could make no impression upon her.

About an hour after tea, and while we were all engaged in pleasant conversation, the door of the parlor opened, and in walked Mr. Douglass. At first glance I thought I must be mistaken. But no, it was Edward himself. But what a figure he did cut! His uncombed hair was standing up, in stiff spikes, in a hundred different directions; his face could not have felt the touch of a razor for two or three days; and he was guiltless of clean linen for at least the same length of time. His vest was soiled; his boots unblacked; and there was an unmistakeable hole in one of his elbows.

"Why, Edward!" exclaimed his wife, with a look of mortification and distress, as her husband came across the room, with a face in which no consciousness of the figure he cut could be detected.

"Why my dear fellow! What is the matter?" said my husband, frankly; for he perceived that the ladies were beginning to titter, and that the gentlemen were looking at each other, and trying to repress their risible tendencies; and therefore deemed it best to throw off all reserve on the subject.

"The matter? Nothing's the matter, I believe Why do you ask?" Douglass looked grave.

"Well may he ask what's the matter?" broke in Cora, energetically. "How could you come here in such a plight!"

"In such a plight?" And Edward looked down at himself; felt his beard, and run his fingers through his hair. "What's the matter? Is any thing wrong?"

"You look as if you'd just waked up from a nap of a week with your clothes on, and come off without washing your face or combing your hair," said my husband.

"Oh!" And Edward's countenance brightened a a little. Then he said, with much gravity of manner—

"I've been extremely hurried of late; and only left my store a few minutes ago. I hardly thought it worth while to go home to dress up. I knew we were all friends here. Besides, *as my fortune is made*"—and he glanced with a look not to be mistaken, toward his wife—"I don't feel called upon to give as much attention to mere dress as formerly Before I was married, it was necessary to be particular in these matters, but now its of no consequence."

I turned toward Cora. Her face was like crimson. In a few moments she arose and went quickly from the room. I followed her, and Edward came after us, pretty sore. He found his wife in tears and sobbing almost hysterically.

"I've got a carriage at the door," he said to me, aside, half laughing, half serious. "So help her on with her things, and we'll retire in disorder."

"But its too bad in you, Mr. Douglass," replied I.

"Forgive me for making your house the scene of this lesson to Cora," he whispered "It had to be given, and I thought I could venture to trespass upon your forbearance."

"I'll think about that," said I. in return.

In a few minutes Cora and her husband retired, and in spite of good breeding and everything else, we all had a hearty laugh over the matter, on my return to the parlor, where I explained the curious little scene that had just occurred.

How Cora and her husband settled the affair between themselves, I never inquired. But one thing is certain; I never saw her in a slovenly dress afterwards, at home or abroad. She was cured.

THE FANCY STORE;

OR, MY FRIENDS OF THE COTTAGE.

BY JULIA A. PARKER.

CHAPTER I.

"The feeling heart, simplicity of life.
And elegance and taste." THOMSON.

STRANGE, is it not, that so large a share of the happiness or misery of a human being is dependent on the characters of those with whom he may come in contact in the ordinary concerns of life! The heart is a delicate instrument of many strings, which to the soft fingering of justice, kindness and sympathy, sends forth ever its sweet harmonies through the whole being—or utters the melancholy music of its breaking chords, when roughly swept by the thoughtless hand of selfishness! Until the day when the books shall be opened, wherein are recorded the secrets of our earthly existence, never shall we know how many budding hopes we have remorselessly trampled to the dust, that asked of us but a little fostering care—a single beam of kindliness, to have made them like some sweet floweret of the vale that in the maturity of its loveliness opens its bosom to the sun, and in return for its cheering warmth yields up its very soul a fragrant holocaust to its benefactor! Never shall we know how many noble purposes we have unmeaningly frustrated, how many pure rills of human felicity we have unwittingly turned into waters of bitterness! Dost wonder, friend of mine, that my thoughts should have donned so sombre a drapery at the sight of that sweet country home, that nestles so peacefully amid the dark green foliage of its sylvan guardians, beneath whose drooping boughs sleep the sunshine and the shade, as if to remind of those mingled joys and sorrows, that, alas! are no stranger guests in the homes of earth? Thou shalt not wonder long. Seat thyself by me on this green knoll that commands a view of the charming portico, enwreathed with flowering vines that seem ambitious to reach the very summit of the cottage they adorn, bearing proudly aloft their precious burthens of beauty and perfume—or take my arm in the spirit of friendly converse, while we ramble among the woodlands that skirt the cultivated grounds around it, so tastefully arranged that poetry might wander enamored among their winding paths and sheltered arbors, exacting tribute from all bright things and fair with which to weave her web of golden fancies.

Rested thine eye ever upon a holier spot? I grant it not one of those sumptuous residences, where pride sits portress at the gate, and empty ceremony invites within a pageant throng to a participation of every joy, save those over which the heart presides. Ah, no! in many a more splendid residence have I been a guest, but this was a home of peace and love. At richer banquets have I sat me down, but here was elegant and ample hospitality. In drawing-rooms more gorgeously furnished have I sought the happiness the world offers, but here was tasteful arrangement and that air of comfortable ease that stops short of magnificence. Elsewhere have I found louder pretension and warmer profession in friendship's cause, but here was a truthfulness and sincerity that stamp as genuine the currency of noble natures. And as I have gazed from yonder window, beneath which thou seest the clustering roses, on this river winding majestically through its rich strip of meadow land, ever and anon revealing itself to the eye like some mine of precious silver just escaped from its dark abode to meet the glorious sun and melt beneath his glance—or on the dim outline of the far-off mountains, which seem to invite upward the wings of thought, I have seemed to realize my beautiful *ideal* of an earthly Paradise! God be blessed for mountains! I would have *my* home in sight of the everlasting hills, whose "Heaven-built galleries," like the angel-ladder of patriarchal vision, link Heaven to earth in harmony, and make this little globe of ours a neighbor to the skies! But let me turn from nature, fascinating as she may be in all her varied loveliness, and full of that delicate sympathy with all our changeful moods, that the world does not always offer to talk of human hearts that have struggled nobly, albeit, to the superficial observer, as it were vainly—that have labored and waited—hoped and endured—yea, have been made perfect through sufferings.

Dr. Carver, the owner of this delightful retreat from the noise and bustle of our busy city of brotherly love, was the son of one of the most wealthy and respectable citizens of the town, and on the death of his father inherited with an elder brother an unincumbered and ample fortune. Having availed himself of the choice advantages for an acquaintance with medical science for which our good city is so renowned, he nobly resolved that, though independent, activity and usefulness should crown his future life. My first acquaintance with him commenced several years after his marriage with the lovely and accomplished Mary Layton, who, though an orphan and destitute of fortune, had been judiciously reared by a widowed aunt, under whose gentle guidance she had become every thing that is desirable in woman.

To yonder beautiful spot he brought his charming bride, and never did youthful lovers bind themselves by the irrevocable vow under happier auspices of the purest enjoyment that can gush forth from the sin-poisoned fountains of earth. With a perfect harmony of taste and feeling—worshipping alike the beautiful

and true in nature and art—living for and in each other, yet not unmindful of the claims of our common humanity and the higher ones of Heaven—surrounded by all those artificial elegancies that betoken refinement and cultivation, and which give such a charm to an existence otherwise blest, though often mistaken as themselves the sources of that felicity whose well-springs are the depths of our spiritual being. I say with such blessings in possession, and life's bright firmament so prophetic of unclouded days—so rich in the heart's inestimable wealth, that taketh to itself no wings, save those dove-like ones that waft it back from the world's turbulent waters to its sheltering ark of home, what golden dreams must have hovered like angels around the sanctuary of their hearts! What a roseate hue must have mantled upon the nectar of life's cup for them, and the great groan that Creation uttereth in her travail of woe all unheard, save a few faint echoes, like the distant murmuring of the sea that left no discord in the harmonies of their own being.

The summer of 18— found me an invalid in yonder pent-up and populous city, whose thousand roofs and glittering spires loom up proudly in the distance. Every one knows who has been shut up within his own walls, or threaded in the hot season the crowded streets of a town teeming with a busy population, when the eye looks up to avoid the glare of the burnished pavement—looks down dazzled with the bewildering sheen of the brassy Heavens above—closes in disgust at the legion of disagreeable sights that haunt your progress at every step—pallid and anxious faces that tell of care-worn existence—squalid and tattered poverty with premature decay written in fearful characters upon its brow—business, with his rapid step responding to the calls of interest, and hastening forward to his harvest of gain—in fine, when every sense seems the inlet of painful emotion, how eloquently and persuasively the soul pleads against the impoverishment to which she is subjected in the unnatural excitement of city life, and how our whole nature yearns for the green fields—the dancing rivulets and woodland solitudes of rural life! Yes, even in health deeper glows the cheek, and the eye kindles with new lustre as we anticipate an interval of release from the busy temporalities of artificial life which hang upon us with a baneful influence, as I have seen the dense parasite moss of a Southern clime sap the strength of a noble tree, and enshroud it in its own sombre drapery. But, to the invalid, in whose veins the tide of life creeps sluggishly—whose languid gaze and feeble steps appeal to the heart of sympathy, how life-inspiring, how almost *galvanic* the sweet dream of the health-breathing airs of nature's wild domain! And how we long in the language of the "Voices of the Night," to go

> Into the blithe and breathing air,
> Into the solemn wood,
> Solemn and silent everywhere!
> Nature with folded hands seems there,
> Kneeling at her evening prayer!
> Or where the denser grove receives
> No sunlight from above,
> But the dark foliage interweaves
> In one unbroken roof of leaves,
> Underneath whose sloping eaves
> The shadows hardly move.

And here in this quiet, charming villa, I called upon hope to fulfil her sweet promises of the vigorous step—the elastic spirits—the warm, bright hue of returning health. But oh, the beautiful deceiver, like many another votary how long I called in vain. The balm-laden zephyrs fanned my cheek, but stole not the lily therefrom—they cooled my burning brow, but left no gift of strength behind. Anticipating no solacement from further medical aid, which I had hitherto found fruitless—disappointed in the fond belief that the pure influences of country life would be potent to stay the progress of disease, and say, "thus far and no further shalt thou go," yet with that strange tenacity with which we cling even to a life of suffering, I consented that Dr. Carver, of whose professional skill and rare success I had heard much, should be called to my aid. Wert thou ever an invalid? Then thou knowest how wildly the heart flutters in its alternations between hope and fear as the poor, trembling, nervous patient awaits the coming of one, whom he fancies the deputy of fate, commissioned to utter the terrific sentence, "dust thou art," or "take up thy bed and walk." My comfortable fauteuil had been drawn to the window, and as I sat up, as an invalid, holding in my hand a little gold repeater, that seemed determined in its sluggishness never again to tell me the hour, my imagination was busy delineating a little bustling sort of a man, with nostrums enough for a hospital, and a generous elevation of self-complacency, who at the first glimpse at my pale face and attenuated form had started back in ominous astonishment, in which dramatic attitude I read my irrevocable sentence! But surely never had the picture writing of this strange caricaturist been more at war with truth. My door opened, and before me stood a tall, superb figure, whose distinctive air was that manliness that seems to concentrate in itself the essence of all noble qualities, softened by a delicate, but unassuming expression of sympathy with suffering, that beamed from a soul-kindled eye, reminding one of the "gentle air of spring, as from the morning's dewy flowers it comes, full of their fragrance." With an easy gracefulness that bespoke a knowledge of the world, he kindly saluted me, and, without assuming that peculiar business air that seems to say my visit is a professional one, please hasten to the point and give me a list of your ailments, he made a few passing remarks on the beauty of the country at that lovely season, and noticing on my table a tasteful bouquet of wild flowers, which had been left there by a friend, that they might tell me a tale of their woodland home in their own sweet dialect, he said, "I will not ask you if you are fond of flowers? They are among the objects that we all love, and appeal to the purest and holiest sentiments of our nature. They are the illuminated manuscript of a God of love, in whose delicate tracery we read His wisdom, goodness and paternal care; for surely if *their* gentle and fragile lives are sustained by His Almighty energy, and clad in raiment more gorgeous than the spirit of beauty ever lavished upon a monarch's robes, may we not implicitly believe that His *intelligent creatures* are the far dearer objects of His goodness? This confidence gives us strength cheerfully to accept all the

allotments of His Providence, whether sickness or health—whether joy or sorrow." And, severing a violet from its blue-robed sisterhood, he proceeded to show how the simplest flower that timidly opens its dewy eye to the morning is in itself a little volume of mysteries, which, when interpreted by the eye of taste, and a mind enriched with scientific lore, discourses most eloquently on the glorious attributes of the Great Artist, whose creations mock at the feeble attempts of human skill to imitate the inimitable!

Needless to say that the rich bursts of enthusiasm from his highly gifted intellect operated like a lethean, making me quite forgetful of every sensation of languor and suffering, and springing from my chair, I took from the few books on my mantle-piece a Bötamy, saying—"Dr. Carver, your remarks have awakened my passionate love of flowers, which with everything else of interest I was fast losing in my gloomy forebodings of early death. Does the country furnish many floral specimens for analysis?"

"'Tis unusually rich," replied he, "and seldom do I return from my professional excursions without some rare and beautiful gem for my already ponderous herbarium. And when you find yourself strong enough to take a little jaunt in the country I will send my carriage round for you, and Mary and my little Ada shall accompany you. They too love flowers, and in your collections and the picturesque scenery around us, I hope you may find your health and spirits invigorated."

"I feel quite strong already, sir," said I, "and fancy I could ride with only a trifle of fatigue." Nay, but do not smile, patient listener, at the milder tone my malady had so suddenly assumed, and the unwonted vigor of the before drooping invalid. Necromancy there certainly was in the change—but it was the charm that lies in a deep knowledge of Hygeia's laws, in the philosophy of which so few of her priesthood are initiated. He believed in the ability of the soul to work miracles, and that when she can be persuaded to use her high prerogatives, few are the drugs of the apothecary she calls to her aid. With the quick perception of an adept in his art, he had detected in his patient a desponding spirit, whose foreshadowings were dark as night—jealously watching every presage of disease, closing a deaf ear to the sweet minstrelsy of nature and the glad voices of hope, and spurning the gentle solicitations of the thousand blessings, that in the saddest of human conditions would court the desponding heart and seduce it from its sorrows. Through the *soul* he had touched the springs of life, and the harmony of her delicate and intricate organization was about to be restored. A few simple tonics only remained upon my table after his departure. Ah, thought I, would that all whose high mission it is to visit the chamber of sickness and alleviate the ills of suffering humanity could speak words of comfort and hope to the disheartened spirit—could inspire serenity and resignation by pointing to that Being, who tenderly sympathizes in the sorrows of His children, and chastens but to sanctify—that all had power so to inspire the undying soul with a consciousness of its own superior dignity, as often to enable it to break from the thraldom of bodily infirmity.

The next visit of Dr. Carver, he led by the hand his little daughter, a sweet child of some seven summers, with a form over which the graces might have held their jubilee: a countenance modelled from a cherub's, from which looked out such deep, intense blue eyes, as reveal a world of meaning in their expression, and betray all the soul within. And then her hair! oh, such hair! why a very shower of bright sunny curls hung upon her fine head, and lay about her white shoulders like a fountain's descending spray upon the pure marble it bathes! Her voice was all melody, sweet as the tones which the ærial spirit awakens in his own trembling lute! What could I but love her ardently, passionately, devotedly? I drew her to me and kissed her pure brow, and pressed her tiny hand in mine, sealing an affection that from this moment never knew interruption. Daily did she come to light up the gloom of my invalid chamber by her almost seraphic loveliness, and charm to rest the dark spirits that hovered over it by the merry laugh of childhood's joyousness. At her gentle entreaty I soon found myself drawn out to breathe the fresh air of the morning—to see the opening flowers, and hear the blithe carol of the birds which filled the very air with the gushes of their wild improvisation. Health, so long wooed in vain, no longer refused her gladdening influences! Zephyrus now brought healing on his wings! The goblet of life again effervesced with hope and gladness, and earth, dismantled of the sombre hues in which a morbid fancy had so long invested her, once more appeared in the beauty and freshness of her primeval dawn! None but a convalescent can realize the ecstacy that attends on restored blessings, which are like the migratory birds that have left us in the winter of our desolation only to return with a richer plumage, a sweeter song.

The monotony of the day was now agreeably interrupted by the morning walk or ride in company with my little pet and her lovely mother, on a visit to some of the benevolent institutions that adorn the environs of the marble city, and throw over it that mantle of moral beauty, whose rich embroidery betrays the fair hands of Heaven-born charity—or perchance an excursion to the charming Wissahicon, where the sylvan deities still hold their court on the very borders of fashion's and mammon's domain—or by a ramble in pursuit of some of the "beauteous sisterhood" of wild flowers, whose gentle lives were to be sacrificed, and their remains embalmed in my flora's repository. Thus passed a series of happy days, each cementing more firmly the links of a friendship commenced on their part in sympathy with suffering—on mine in gratitude for the most disinterested kindness and admiration of the purest and noblest qualities of human character that breathe of Eden ere the fall.

CHAPTER II.

"Let weaker natures suffer and despair,
Great souls snatch vigor from the stormy airs!
Grief not the languor, but the action brings,
And clouds the horizon—but to nerve the wings."

ANON.

As time's silent car passed on, often and long was I a guest at the cottage. Ada had grown up to be, if

possible, more beautiful and gifted even than the rich spring of her childhood promised. The idol of her parents, she had yet been judiciously reared, and taught by precept and example those grand moral lessons, without which talent is a fearful dower, and beauty a rose without perfume. Though an only child, her wayward fancies had not been allowed to rove at will—on the contrary she had early learned that lesson so needful to woman—a noble, self-sacrifice for the good and happiness of others. In addition to the best advantages of school education, her fine mind had received that home culture that blends and harmonizes all other acquirements, and like the skilful grouping of a picture, gives to each its relative place and importance, and to the whole a beautiful and unbroken unity. It had ever been the object of Dr. Carver to make his daughter a useful and practical woman, and though born to affluence to enrich her mind with those solid acquirements and habits of self-reliance, that might prove to her a source of comfort and peace in those dark days of life, from which wealth can purchase no exemption. "For," said he, "fortune, everywhere capricious, is especially so in a country like ours, and the tenure by which we hold her gifts exceedingly precarious. The immediate ancestors of the rich man of to-day have been too poor and menial for his narrow recollection, and children, on whose birth honor and magnificence attended, have worn the livery of servitude, and drank the cup of penury. I cannot insure my fortune to my daughter, therefore would I bequeath to her a legacy that adversity cannot destroy—that circumstances cannot depreciate."

But for Ada Carver, rich in youth, beauty, talent and fortune, what "death-telling seer" would have dared to array her future in any hues, save the gorgeous one of her own bright imaginations? Yet even now were the dark threads selected to be inwoven in her web of destiny—clouds yet invisible in her brilliant sky were seen now gathering to involve her day in an almost rayless night.

It was a summer's balmy morning, and we were all but Ada assembled in the breakfast parlor to enjoy the lengthened social meal, and to read and discuss in the intervals of our delicious coffee—that talk-exciting beverage—the news of the morning paper Soon Ada joined us in her snow-white morning wrapper, her luxuriant hair imprisoned in one of those delicately simple caps that give such a charm to a lovely face. As a vision of beauty she appeared before us, and I fancied I saw an expression of joyful satisfaction in the face of her parents as she filled up the little circle, and bade us good morn in a voice "musical as silver bells."

The meal was still in progress, when a messenger entered announcing to Dr. Carver the entire destruction of his city property by a fire, which was still raging. He had just invested almost his entire fortune in town residences, eligibly situated, which promised to yield him in rents an ample income, and each day since the purchase had he intended to secure them by insurance, which a pressure of professional business had hitherto prevented. Thus by a single stroke of calamity's iron hand had his inheritance been swept away forever!

At this sad intelligence I rose to leave the room, feeling that a disaster so sudden and overwhelming might elicit even in minds so well fortified by religion's armor, those weaknesses and infirmities that should have no witnesses.

"Be seated again," said Dr. Carver, in a calm and untremulous voice. "We now have a test of the sincerity of our daily prayer, 'Thy will be done on earth as it is in Heaven.' God has taken us at our word, to make us feel that He is the sovereign Arbiter of events, and has a perfect right to reclaim His gifts, seeing, perhaps, that they are stealing our hearts from Him who will accept no divided homage."

Then taking the hand of his wife, whose silence more than words could have done, showed that she felt the blow which was to render her worshipped Ada the heir of poverty. "Mary," said he, "our inheritance is gone, but God in mercy has taken what we could best spare—but left all most needful to our happiness. He has left us each other—our endeared home—some friends that adversity cannot cool, and the means of still obtaining the essentials to enjoyment. I have health, and the profession which has hitherto served rather to fill up life usefully, will now answer a double purpose and insure us independence. You and my dear Ada," he continued, "shall never know while health is spared me any diminution of the comforts and elegancies of life; and if some of our summer friends should desert us, why we will cling only the more closely to each other; and the tried few who yet remain, and our wreath of happiness shall be fresh and fadeless as before."

A few bright, warm tears left their holy fountain to rest upon his hand, while the smile that played over the still lovely features of the wife, and the words, "I want no more," were eloquent in revealing how trifling the value of all other treasures compared with those inestimable gems that lie hidden in warm, truthful, loving hearts.

The next two years brought no change to the family of the cottage, save wearing a deeper channel for those warm affections that flowed onward in gladness and melody. But, alas! that the good should be the stricken ones of earth! Alas, that the citadel of the soul that has been once stormed by calamity, seems ever after more exposed to its attacks, and, like the ruthless invader, rests not till he has sacked and left desolate the fortress that has once yielded to his arms! I had seen the golden charm that mortals blindly worship fade away like the dewy garniture of the morning, and no wail of sorrow—no murmur of discontent broke upon the peaceful serenity of the cottage home. But how find words to paint the agony—the desolation—the despair that filled that hitherto happy abode when the husband—the father—the almost worshipped protector and guardian was brought in from one of his professional absences a senseless paralytic. God had indeed passed by in the whirlwind, and every hope earth-rooted seemed riven and blasted with the fierce tempest. To have breathed words of comfort *then* had been a mockery! There are some calamities that fall upon the spirit with a crushing, deadening weight, leaving the soul astonished, nay, stupefied with the greatness of its woe—when even

the soft pleadings of religion, and the gentle voices of sympathy are all unheard, and nought save the holy dew of time can give strength to arise and put on the garments of resignation. Such was this. For Mrs. Carver the shock had been too great, and nature sunk beneath the load. A violent and dangerous illness succeeded, and life's many stringed harp seemed about to utter its soft melody on earth—no more.

But as the warrior who weaves bright fancies from chivalry's romantic page in the soft indolence of peace, starts from his dreams and arrays himself for the fierce battle, whose thunder has aroused him, so did Ada Carver, a being so dependent and truthful in prosperity, nerve her spirit for a conflict that demanded a nobler heroism than that of the tented-field. Her native strength of character burst from the silken coils a charmed life had woven around it, and the rich fruits of early culture now clustered upon the young tree and mingled with its blossoms. As a superior being she moved through that mournful dwelling, now lending her gentle ministrations to an impotent father—anon, bending over the couch of a suffering mother. Her soft, white hand smoothed the pillow of sickness—bathed the burning brow—presented the healing drug, and prepared the delicate beverage. The day was to her one long act of self-sacrifice—the night of anxious watchfulness—yet she, who had ever been a stranger to bodily toil and corroding care, betrayed no look of weariness. A calm serenity lighted up her features—a lofty dignity sat upon her brow. Her only prayer had been for life—the lives of the two beings who seemed, in their turn, to depend upon her for support and comfort. She had not dared to ask for more, so great had seemed the boon she craved, and when, at length, health re-visited one parent, and the mind of the other became cloudless, though disease still held the body prisoner, she felt in the fulness of her gratitude an intensity of enjoyment which uninterrupted prosperity never knew. So true it is that when unvisited by sorrow, we are unconscious of our bliss; while our deepest and most extatic joys arise from a *contrast* with suffering doubt and fear. Strange it may be, yet I have sometimes fancied the felicity of Heaven would want vitality if *unmingled with tears!*

With Dr. Carver the hope of restoration to active life seemed chimerical. The nature of his disease—the severity of the attack forbade the indulgence of any fond anticipation, except that for some years he might be spared to his family as a friend and counsellor. Mrs. Carver was now sufficiently restored to take her place by the bedside of her husband; and Ada had once more leisure for rest and recreation. In one of these intervals she grasped my hand as we met in the garden walks, and said, "come with me, friend of mine, to my room. I have long wanted a private interview with you, and you will see that I have a little plan to reveal, in which you will be my counsellor, will you not?"

"Command me to the whole of my kingdom," replied I—"I am entirely at your bidding."

To her little boudoir we repaired, and seating herself, she said, "you see the misfortunes that have befallen our family—first our fortune, which we scarcely ··, while richer blessings remained—then the illness of my father, that has left no hope behind. Though he has never spoken of our wordly condition, often in his dreams have I heard him allude to it so mournfully and bitterly, as to convince me that it is the burden of his thoughts by day. I have health and the ability now to labor for those on whom I have hitherto been dependent. Henceforth I live but for one object—to supply my parents by my own exertions with their accustomed comforts while they live—and to retain in our possession the home that has ever been so dear to us. Tell me now, Annie, how I may best attain my object!"

I began to remonstrate, and show how impossible I conceived it to be for one so young, so delicately and luxuriously bred, so unlearned in the world's ways, to go forth into the walks of business—to come in contact with the rough points of human character, and struggle for what had hitherto been enjoyed without an effort. "Only men endowed by nature, with sensibilities less acute than ours, or women reared in the highways of life can do this successfully. But how could you, Ada?"

"Tell me no more of this," said she. "All these considerations have been present to my mind, but they have not shaken me from my purpose. I feel myself strong to do what duty and affection alike prompt."

I saw that I had mistaken her character, that there was that in her that the fires of trial alone elicit and purify; that for her, suffering would consist in inaction, and silently I listened to the plan she had already matured.

"Have you not observed," she continued, "how large a portion of the mercantile business of our city is transacted by our sex, and that without degradation and apparently with immediate gain? Be not surprised when I tell you that I have thought of opening a store of fancy articles, similar to that of Mrs. M.'s, in —— street. A few days since, when in town, I saw a bill upon her store, and, on inquiry, found that she had closed her business to reside in the country, having amassed a considerable fortune. Could I succeed to her place might we not again be independent? Will you do me the favor to break this subject to my father, who would be so surprised to hear it from me, that I should find myself wholly unable to repel his objections."

Too full of anxiety was my heart for my sanguine young friend, but I yielded to her wishes, and, as no time was to be lost, I hastened at once to acquaint Dr. Carver with the purpose of his daughter.

"Never!" exclaimed he, when I had finished my unpleasant task, "never shall my beloved child submit to this for me. Sooner, far sooner, would both her mother and myself become the recipents of public beneficence, than her gentle nature should be thus exposed to the toils—the anxieties—the heart aches incident to business! Oh, for myself alone, how cheerfully could I have borne all the visitations of Heaven; but for Mary and her!" Here the husband and father wept: "tears such as angels weep" gushed forth, pure and holy from the dross of earth, unstaining even manhood's cheek. The struggle within was

severe, but soon a thoughtful calmness settled upon his features, and I continued—

"You wish your daughter's happiness? Self-sacrifice for her parents sake—exertion for their comfort can alone secure it under present adverse circumstances. Forbidden to do this, she will yield to your wishes, but her spirit will prey upon itself and dwell unceasingly upon the sorrows that she believes herself able to alleviate. Consider the subject in all its bearings, and talk with Ada herself upon it."

Not many days had elapsed before I was again summoned to the former place of consultation, and, with tears of joy, Ada announced to me the final consent of her parents; and that by her father's permission she had applied to a dealer in fancy goods in New York, for such an amount of stock as she deemed sufficient to make a beginning in trade; the payment of which she hoped soon to be able to meet from the profits of her sales. The next day I accompanied Ada to town for the purpose of renting the store in question. The carriage landed us in a remote part of the city before a low, dingy looking dwelling, which we had learned was the residence of the landlord with whom we were to negotiate. Bell there was none, and the black, dusty knocker acknowledged to being seldom molested.

"Is Mr. Scrootz in?" inquired I, of the old dame who opened the door.

"I reckon he may be, and if ye will walk in I will find him." We were accordingly ushered into a room, whose obsolete and uncouth furniture told a tale of poverty or the miser's gain; the external symbols of each being similar. Presently, a little withered personage, in thread-bare broad-cloth, made his appearance, answering in all respects to the cognomen of Scrootz.

"Miss Carver," said I, "the daughter of Dr. Carver, and grand-daughter of the late Samuel Carver, of —— street. You may have known him."

"Ah, yes! yes! fine old gentleman!—good property too—he and I knew each other right well, ha! ha!"

"This young lady," said I, anxious to spare my friend in this her first essay, "has called to make some inquiries respecting the store to be rented in —— street, just vacated by Mrs. M."

"Ah, good situation that—fine place to make money —going to open a dry goods store, maam?"

"A store of fancy articles," was the almost inaudible answer.

"Well, well, Mrs. M. was an excellent tenant, paid rent very prompt—always expect to be paid the day the quarter ends, for I am in want of money, ye see."

Assuming some dignity, and repressing the indignation I felt at the remarks of this money-worshipper, I took it upon me to say that Miss Carver would punctually meet all her engagements; and after some further tedious conversation we withdrew, bearing with us the key that was to admit my poor friend to scenes untried.

In due time the store was fitted up and stocked with a variety of tasteful and elegant articles. Customers came, and were received by the new incumbent with that graceful ease and modest demeanor that are not more needful in the gay saloon than in the commerce of business. From noon till night stood that fair young girl behind the counter, answering the busy and impatient demands of the numerous purchasers, wearing that calm dignity which conscious duty gives in every situation in life. The rich and fashionable tossed about the splendid goods, and murmured to each other their admiration of the beautiful girl before them—but none saw the vulture of anxiety preying upon her heart, or detected beneath the fair exterior the noble spirit that fainted not beneath its burden of self-sacrifice. A sufficient number of cash payments she daily received to meet all the wants of her parents as well as her own—reserving her large bills, which she had credited, for the payment of rent and stock in trade.

At length the day drew near in which she was to cancel her obligations to her landlord, and having had an insight into his character, as well as from an honorable desire on her own part to meet the demands against her punctually; she made out and intrusted to her collector several bills, the amount of which was absolutely necessary for her own engagements.

In one of the most sumptuous residences of —— street were heard the glad voices of festivity and mirth. The gas-lights poured out their flood of glory, which was reflected from the golden cornices and a thousand glittering pendants, making its spacious and lofty saloons one scene of brilliant splendor. Through these floated fairy forms of surpassing loveliness, clad in rich vestures, where velvet and lace, pearls, diamonds and gold, were all laid under contribution to the handmaidens of beauty's queen. As Calypso among her nymphs, more proudly than all, moved with elegant bearing the mistress of that lordly home among her assembled guests. But from that gay assembly no thought was wafted forth to the world of suffering a large city encloses within its limits—the thousands whose *daily lot* is weariness and toil—the innumerable throng who are racked with physical suffering—with agony of mind or sad disquietude of heart—yea, "life's groaning tide" broke not upon that night's revelry, but every face was joyful and bright as if earth were still reposing in her Eden smile! On the morning of the day that was to end thus gaily, the graceful hostess had been called upon by Miss Carver's agent, who in the most civil manner possible made known to her that the person by whom he was sent, would be much obliged if she would settle the bill at that time.

"Good Lord, what an account is this?" exclaimed she, tossing her head disdainfully, "sure I am I have never had half of these articles, and who would have believed that such a person as I took her to be, would have had the want of principle to demand of me such exorbitant prices! Credit indeed! A pretty credit—not three months since I made the purchases. Please tell Miss Carver," said she, handing back the bill, "that I am very much engaged this morning, but will soon call and settle with her, and that she need have no fears of non-payment." And, turning away abruptly, the subject was from that moment forgotten in the tumult of worldly excitement. And yet this woman was not wholly heartless, but "evil is wrought by *want* of *thought* as well as *want* of *heart*." Could

she have seen the diappointment—the suffering occasioned by her refusal to pay a just demand, doubtless she might have allowed herself to be drawn a moment from her fancied urgent engagements, to listen to the pleadings of the voice within. But in the whirlpool of fashionable dissipation was she borne onward, and she, who had never known a want or a solicitude, that a full purse was not at hand to relieve, how should she know what human hearts can suffer for want of a pittance of that gold dust which she flung so lightly to the winds—or with what feelings of gratitude the poor receive even the tributes of justice. From this abode passed on our collector to many another mansion, bringing from them trifling sums or indefinite promises. Unfortunately, as the tale of his unsuccessful mission was falling upon Ada's ear, and an iron hand pressing heavily upon her heart, who should her eye rest upon but the scrawny figure of Scrootz, who with stealthy step had entered the store and overheard the conversation. With a quick perception of the scantiness of her finances, and without a particle of civility, which he never used save when it hung upon him like an ill-made garment in the presence of his superiors in wealth, this avater of mammon placing himself before her with an expression of merciliness that would have awed a soul less firm than her own, he said—

"Well, Miss Carver, I believe I have not mistaken the day I was to call for my rent?—'spose its ready, eh?"

"I am sorry to tell you, sir, that it is not ready today—though I have made every effort for punctual payment, but if you will have the goodness to wait a few days it shall be left at your house."

"A few days, madam! If you will please tell me how much time that is, I will call again when it expires."

Ada faltered out, this day week, and when she raised her eyes found herself alone.

Wearily passed the sleepless hours of that long night to my poor friend. Sleep was courted in vain, or if for a brief season it weighed down her tearful eyelids, it brought only visions of sorrow—unsuccessful schemes and broken hopes. Yet God's equal eye looked down that night upon the bewildered votaries of pleasure, who drank her sparkling cup and feasted in her banquet halls, and on the lonely hearts and watchful eyes of adversity's stricken children! But on the evil and the good arose His new-created day, and with its returning light hope's golden beams broke in upon Ada's drooping spirit, and effort again strengthened her heart.

It was the day for the promised visit of the landlord, and Ada's exertions had enabled her to pay but a part of the demand, while a still heavier one had been made upon her by the firm of which she had purchased her stock. What was to be done? She felt that she had the means of honorably meeting all, but how render to others justice when justice was denied to her?

In this manner wore away a year of harrassing care, toil and suffering, known only to Him who readeth the book of human hearts! She had succeeded in finally satisfying her iron-hearted landlord, but the difficulty she found in collecting her bills, together with several entire losses, had made it wholly impossible for her to keep her credit good with the mercantile house to whom she was indebted. More promptly might her payments have been made, could she have persuaded herself to borrow from any of the rich friends to whom her father's house had for so many years been hospitably open; but it is hard for the poor to ask pecuniary favors of the rich—it is sometimes harder for the rich to grant them. From her father Ada could no longer conceal the trials of her situation, who, disappointed as he was at the failure of efforts so nobly made, yet had he too much knowledge of the affairs of business to be surprised. By his advice and the embarrassments under which she suffered, she made preparations for closing her store and paying her creditors. She returned to her parents just with the world, but destitute of all wherewith to smooth their passage to the grave. To retain their home was now impossible. To dispose of that and seek some humbler one adapted to their altered circumstances, was now the subject of their thoughts and efforts.

CHAPTER III.

Sweet are the uses of adversity, which, like the toad,
Ugly and venomous, wears yet a precious jewel in his head.

At the United States Hotel was announced the arrival of a gentleman from Cuba. After dinner, in glancing over the morning papers, his eye met the advertisement of the sale of Dr. Carver's real and personal estate, which was to be held on the following day. Turning to a stranger who sat near him, he made sundry inquiries into the cause of the sale. The stranger discovering an interest in the inquirer, entered into the details of the family history—the misfortunes of the parents—the heroic efforts and generous self-sacrifice of the daughter.

The morning that was to see them deprived of all that had made home so lovely—yea, of that home itself, dawned sadly upon the inmates of the cottage. They had arisen at an early hour to make every preparation for a day so trying, and apparently for the last time in that domestic sanctuary, over which the "cherubim peace and love" had so long joined their spread wings, they united in prayer for strength equal to their trials and acquiescence in the will of Him who smites with a father's hand.

But to the great surprise and disappointment of the vast crowd who thronged the house, hoping to bear away at their own low estimate its beautful and tasteful ornaments—not a single article was allowed to be removed from its place. A dark Spaniard looking gentleman was present, whom none knew, who had outbid on every article, and purchased it for himself. In the same manner had the real estate passed into his hands. Thus at the close of that day no change was perceptible in the cottage. It had only changed owners. The crowd dispersed, and the stranger lingered to meet the family. To Dr. Carver he introduced himself as the only surviving son of his elder brother. Born on the island of Cuba, to which his father had early attached his fortunes, he had hitherto known nothing of his uncle's family, except by the

occasional letters that had passed between the brothers. From these, however, he had learned to think of them with interest and affection, and now that his own family ties were sundered by the recent death of his widowed father, he had resolved to journey thither, hoping that a change of scene and the sympathy of kindred might soften the poignancy of his grief. Need I say how cordially he was welcomed?—how almost at once the interest of kindred seemed to ripen into the warmest and tenderest friendship?—how in heart-open communion, and the details of family vicissitudes, the night wore on unnoticed? When they separated at a late hour, the estate had again passed back to its former owner, the generous gift of a noble nature.

Each had sought the pillow of rest, but sleep came not. It flies impetuous joy as well as corroding grief. Young Carver believed he had found in his fair cousin his ideal of a perfect woman fully realized, and though he had known her but a few hours, yet these few hours had been active agents in lighting the torch of love within his soul. Ada's beauty, her intelligence, her winning manners and filial devotion had so won upon his heart, that he felt that God had now for him but *one* blessing, sufficient in itself for his happiness, deprived of which all others were poor!

And Ada! could she forget to be grateful? And is not gratitude in woman's heart akin to love? And when, not long after, in one of her morning rambles, she found herself joined by him, whose generous and manly heart was henceforth to be her throne, and her ear drank in his impassioned vows of truthful affection, the deeper tinge on her cheek and tear-dimmed eye assured him that love's eloquent language needs no interpreter!

Since then the wheels of time have made many a revolution. Those who watched over her infancy and guided her youth have gently passed from their earthly home to a brighter one, where *change* comes not; while peace, affluence and happiness in all her relations have been the rich dowry of my friend. With courtly grace she moves in the circles of the great, and like an "earth-treading star" among that sacred class, *God's poor on earth*. From her own deep experience in the trials of affliction's children, she knows how to render *timely* aid to the needy, and to speak words of comfort and hope to the anxious heart. To one who was congratulating her on the elegant enjoyments of her lot, she replied, "far above all these do I value the practical lessons I learned in the 'Fancy Store,' far fearful is the gift of wealth with a heart thoughtlessly blind to those sufferings it is conferred upon us to relieve."

THE GAMBLER.

BY THE LATE WILLIS GAYLORD CLARK.

> "Such was the cause that turned so many off
> Rebelliously from God, and led them on
> From vain to vainer still, in endless chase.
> And such the cause that made so many cheeks
> Pale, and so many knees to shake."—COURSE OF TIME.

ONE stormy evening, in the month of October, 1819, I was descending the little hill that wound its circuitous path into my native village. The drapery of the declining year was hung upon the woodlands, and the blast rustled among the poplars on either side of the way, with a boding and melancholy sound. The thoughts of my mind were colored by the aspect of the scene around me; and I grew pensive and abstracted.

Never does the thought of man's dissolution, and a foretaste of the world to come, press so intently upon the mind as in the autumn season. It is not, perhaps, difficult to account for the coming on of these reflections; in as much as the decay of nature speaks forcibly and audibly to the heart of man—reminding him of his own frail nature, and expressing in its mute eloquence what the Scripture has recorded for the eye and heart. "We do all fade as a leaf:—Man cometh forth like a flower and is cut down: he fleeth also as a shadow and continueth not."

Like many villages in the country, my native town extended two or three miles; the houses were not joined together, but each domicil was surrounded with a capacious garden well stocked with fruit trees; so that the vale presented the aspect of a continuous row of farm-houses. The village green was held sacred; and the tall spire awoke a pleasant music on a Sabbath morn, as the well-dressed inhabitants hastened across the lawn to the house of prayer.

Among the young men who had been my companions in youth, and my fellow travellers in manhood, was Charles Everts. He was handsome and accomplished: had received a fine education; and on the death of his father, a wealthy merchant, succeeded to his estate, and began life at twenty-one, with all the prospects of success that could gather around the path of any pilgrim on earth. His affections were ardently devoted to Juliette Howard, the daughter of the village clergyman: a fair girl, who inherited a beauty from her mother, little short of angelic; and whose heart was the sanctuary of the purest principles, and the most ennobling virtue.

During the last year of his stay at college, where he only went to receive the benefits of education, without the design of applying it to a profession, Charles unfortunately contracted a habit of gaming. On his return he abandoned it for awhile, and then pursued it covertly, "just," as he said, "to kill the time of an evening—make a little money, and feel a pleasant excitement." By degrees he became more involved; and determined on moving to another village on the sea-shore, a few miles distant, where trade was more brisk and profits more lucrative. He was still, notwithstanding his losses, in good business. He sold his house and store, both with the proviso that he was to occupy them until the ensuing spring. He then disposed of his goods by auction, and went to purchase a large stock in one of the great commercial cities. A part of this stock it was his design to dispose of during the winter; and in the beginning of the ensuing year, to open with a great display in his new residence.

On the evening mentioned in the beginning of this tale, I stopped to rest my jaded horse, for a few moments, at the village inn, as well as to get my newspaper from the city, for the village post-office was in the inn.

While I was seated by the stove, the stage from the East drove up to the door, and Charles Everts entered the bar-room. His looks were care-worn and haggard. He gazed at me for a moment without recognition: stalked up to the bar and demanded a glass of brandy. I accosted him, but he stared at me with a vacant look; and asked the bar-keeper for a private room.

He had scarcely closed the door before we heard the report of a pistol. We entered the room. He had committed suicide. The purple current of life was ebbing from his mouth, and the paleness of death was on his brow. In his hand was clasped a scrap of paper—it contained a statement of the loss of his whole property in money, at a gaming-table in New York. Not a penny was saved; and he was indebted to the kindness of the blacklegs who robbed him, for the money which brought him home to die by his own hand!

Who shall describe the terror, the agony of his kind, lovely wife, with her lovely boy? Why should it be described when they both are at rest in the grave? But shall not a voice as of a trumpet arise from the tombs of the victims of gaming, and say, "turn ye at my reproof? Awake from the spell of destruction before thy earthly hopes are blasted, thou gamester. Awake, before despair shall drive thee to that sleep, whose resurrection is uncheered by the sunbeams of hope!"

THE GOLDEN KNIGHT.

BY THOMAS BUCHANAN READ.

CHAPTER I.

I HAVE read, somewhere in an old and curious ballad, a very marvelous story; but many days, months and years have quite obliterated the verses from my memory, leaving only the skeleton of the tale to flutter in my brain like an autumn leaf, which the summer insects have riddled and robbed of its green. But as the main incidents were extremely entertaining, and the general spirit so peculiar to the days of romance and chivalry, I would fain repair the injured leaf, if with nothing better than the poor thread of my simple prose. The ancient minstrel furnished, according to my recollection, neither the year nor kingdom wherein these amusing and instructive events transpired. Therefore my indulgent friends will allow me to begin with "once upon a time;" an expression which custom has sanctioned as lawful, "since no man's memory runneth to the contrary."

Once upon a time, in the days of hawk and hound, and joust and tournament, a beautiful youth there was who lived in the wild woods of the mountains, in a kingdom far away: yet few there were who had ever seen him, and those few were the neighboring shepherds, who, in search of some truants from their flocks, had wandered higher into the hills than was their wont, and had there met the radiant boy walking his sylvan ways. A fortunate thing they deemed it, too, to meet him then, for they knew that the objects of their search could not be far distant; and they blessed the youth, for they thought he guarded their sheep.

It was a beautiful morning in the balmy month of June; and the sun while chasing the cold shadows and damp air from the hills, discovered reclining upon a bank of moss, inlaid with violets, and countless other little flowers of blue, white and red, the mysterious youth. Though his size was that of a boy of twelve, the symmetry of his person was much more perfect and manfully developed than it was likely to be at so tender an age. He was dressed in the simple garb of a shepherd, and a crook wound with leaves and flowers of the wild vine, was lying across his arm, as if he had been tending the flocks through the night, though none were to be seen. The birds were making all the air tremulous with their melody, the water which through all the silent hours had rushed noisily over the neighboring rocks, was now bathed in the golden sunshine, and, as if fearful of disturbing the young shepherd's slumber, seemed to flow further away than it had done in the night, till its tumult was quite mellowed down to a delightful silken rustle. Every opening bud was rocking with the toiling bee, while scattered on the leaves and vines, numberless butterflies were lying, their drooping wings fettered with cold balls of dew. Oh, it was beautiful to think that the chilly weights which the darkness had forged for their golden pinions, should be all gathered up and borne away by those busy angels of light which the sun daily sends from Heaven for such good purposes.

The little shepherd still slumbered, and the slight dimpling of his cheeks seemed to tell of delightful visions sweeping through the solitudes of sleep, like the mellow sunshine gliding amid the drowsy shadows of the forest. Now with parted lips, he appeared to listen as if the noise of bees, the songs of birds, and the rustle of the water were all melted into pleasant words, and fashioning some delightful tale to his enchanted fancy. Surely something more than these simple voices of nature greeted his ear, for now what might have been mistaken for a cluster of blue flowers on the bank near his head, slowly assumed the form of a delicate fairy maiden. She was dressed as a shepherdess, and wore over a pink boddice and silver colored skirt, a violet scarf spangled with gold, and her flossy flaxen hair was filleted with violets and lilies of the valley. She also, like the youth, carried a crook enwreathed with little flowering vines; but this she now quietly laid aside, and with a cautious hand drew the young shepherd's pipe from his breast, and applying the ivory tip to her coral lips, breathed so softly therein that it seemed only as if a humming bird, instead of a bee, hovered on the neighboring honeysuckle. By degrees, as she modulated the stops of the simple pipe into clear and silvery melody, the dimples on the cheeks of the youth deepened till he smiled almost to waking. Still she played, and the sweet sounds seemed to say, "ah, Julien, dear Julien, I love thee, I love thee! All night has thy Viola sat at thy side, and she it was who gave thee the beautiful visions. Ah, Julien, dear Julien! how long shall the violet sigh for its truant lover, the bee?—how long shall I sigh for thee?"

So played the fairy, and the sun shone, the waters rustled, and Julien dreamed on and smiled. Still the beautiful little shepherdess played, and thus the sweet sounds seemed to say, "dear Julien, thou art of royal parentage—thy sire was a prince of a far kingdom; and thy mother the queen of the fairies. But not for this, dear Julien, thy Viola loves thee. Ah, would that thou wert wholly mortal as thy sire, then might I love thee as he was loved, or if thou wert wholly as we are, then could we comprehend one another. Ah, Julien, I tremble for thee: The fates last night were seen pinning a thread from the rays of a star, and they fastened it to a little blue earthly flower! Like a gossamer the thread swayed to and fro between the flower and the star; but the

HARRIETTE.

A SKETCH FROM OUR VILLAGE.

BY MRS. D. ELLEN GOODMAN.

Gentle reader—wast ever in dear, delightful Flowervale! I will take it for granted you are a stranger to its beauties, and, if you please, will accompany you to the brow of that declivity where stands the ancient church, its tall spire pointing like a snowy figure up through the matted foliage to Heaven. It is a mossy, verdant little knoll, with rows of stately maples, one above the other, encircling and folding the holy edifice in a kind embrace; while through the thick quivering leaves its white walls gleam out and glisten in the pure sunlight.

We will stand upon the stone steps of the old door, and gaze for a few moments abroad. It is a fine May day, and the soft breezes whisper among the interwoven boughs of the tall maples, and lift the tresses from our brows, bringing to the heated cheek a coolness, and breathing into the heart a calm and sacred feeling. It is beautiful—the landscape all around. See—yonder to the right is a smooth, placid river, winding gently along through meadows of rich green turf, from whose deep velvet bosom are springing sweet, wild violets, and delicate blue-bells, and pure spotless lilies, mingling their rich varied colors with the glossy green leaves, and blending their fragrance with the low ripple of the rills. Scattered over the variegated carpet are clumps of apple and cherry trees, whose knotty branches bend beneath their crown of clustering pink and white blossoms, whose balmy breath is borne up through the lovely vale to the old church door. Along the western side of the meadow, and a few rods from the river bank, the land gently rises, and stretches on to the edge of a dark, magnificent forest of old oaks, whose giant arms interlock and seem mingling with the snowy clouds which hang lazily down from their blue throne, as if to connect the laughing skies with the beautiful things of earth, over which they bend so lovingly. There is a narrow, well-trodden foot-path winding through the meadows, and across the murmuring stream is thrown a rustic bridge, with slender railings; then the path continues on and up the hill-side, terminating before the door of the old *White House*.

Venerable pile! It has stood for ages immoveable, while beauty has faded, and youth passed to old age; and now *it* too shows strong signs of decay. The dark brown walls seem tottering on their foundation, and lean heavily over the green bank, while the soft spring winds lose their sweet melody as they creep coldly through the open door and broken window panes, whispering sadly and plaintively. But we will turn from the dilapidated mansion and look just forward here, through the thick foliage. A pretty view—is it not? The road stretches along, like a thread of gold, as far as the eye can reach, terminating to the sight just where that tiny spire blends its whiteness with the dark azure of Heaven. And see the snowy cottages on either side of the way, with their neat white fences and green door yards, their bright flower gardens and refreshing shade trees. Now, to the left—a bold mountain, with its dizzy height, rises in awful majesty, and throws its deep shadow along the vale, while the old trees which crown its lofty summit, bend gracefully beneath the spring zephyr that sweeps through their leafy robes, and descends soothingly to the valley below. It is a quiet, lovely scene on either hand, with the new, fresh leaves twittering in the breath of Heaven, and whispering to the buds and blossoms which nestle in the tall grass, and the golden sunlight struggling through the tangled foliage, throwing over the whole a soft and tremulous light. But come with me, dear reader, along the yielding sward, to the back of the old church. Tread lightly, for these modest, meek-eyed violets are all too beautiful to be crushed beneath a careless foot; and they grow spontaneously upon this hallowed spot, and look like gentle spirits dropped from the blue vault above to slumber in the shadows of this holy house.

Do you see that little red school-house, with its snowy enclosure, nestling down in the shade of that huge oak tree? It is but a few rods from the base of this hillock, and the turf about the door looks even greener and fresher than this beneath our feet in the short distance. Now cast your eye over the low roof, across that narrow portal of green, to the fairy lake that sparkles in this flooding light. Oh! is it not beautiful, the blue sky slumbering on its peaceful breast, and the mossy brink everywhere decked with flowery shrubs and drooping boughs? and then that grove of maples reaching down almost to the velvet edge, their tall dark shadows just blending with the deep azure which dyes its waters! I never saw a prettier grove. The trees are all large and perfectly straight; and about the smooth trunks, many a clambering vine has wound its tender fibres, while from many a shady recess the sweetest flowers are shining, and all through the fairy arbor bright birds are flitting with noiseless wing.

It was just such a day as that we have been dreaming of. Bright, fresh, *glorious* May was smiling her *adieu* to earth, and her joyous, lavish successor stood ready, with an armful of beautiful, tiny buds, which but one balmy breath of hers could fan into blossom; the merry birds gave out their parting song, and the fragrant atmosphere seemed condensed into a thin, haze-like vapor, which absorbed the bright, pure

light, as it came from its throne above, and held the golden rays as by a magic spell, until the land seemed slumbering beneath a shadowy mantle, and the tiny birds went floating by intoxicated with a wild, unearthly joy. Oh, how the warm, kindly feelings of the hidden heart gush forth at such a time; and how all evil thoughts flow back to their dark source, and the soul is susceptible of but one emotion—that of *love*—love for everything around—the lovely flower, the singing bird, and the little buzzing insect that hums forth its gladness.

Yes—it was on such a day that Minda and I passed through the little gate, and, arm in arm, slowly proceeded to the neat, red school-house, behind the church. We had promised the little girls, Anne and Lizzy, to go and view their May-day festivities, and we could not have a heart to disappoint the sweet creatures. As we approached the low door, which stood open, soft bird-like music came murmuring on the laden air; and it was such music as could only come from the full heart of a fairy—at least so we thought, as we stood listening, till its last note trembled on the ear and died away in the stillness of death. Then a light foot-fall sounded along the floor, and the fairy herself, clad in a flowing robe of white, stood before us. Both hands were extended, as she grasped one of ours, and bent her bright lips over for the kiss of welcome, while with a merry laugh she cried—

"Well, girls, give me credit for the patience of a Job—for I have been waiting full a half hour for your appearance, and in five minutes had left you to find unaided our sylvan retreat."

"But where, pray, have you hidden your flock, Harriette," I exclaimed, gazing in wonder over the deserted school-room and vacant seats.

"Oh, we will find them presently," was her reply, as she led the way through the green meadow and around the quiet lake toward the maple grove. As we drew near the shadow of the tall trees, and peered through them into the distance, a snowy robe now and then caught our eye, and the murmur of soft voices came gradually to the ear. All at once a ringing laugh, so full of melody that we started forward, was heard—then a white dress floated among the shrubbery, and a little face all radiant with smiles gleamed out from the thousand flaxen curls that streamed back on the breeze, and Lizzy—our dear little pet Lizzy—came all breathless and panting before us.

"Oh! Harriette—dear cousin Harriette," she cried, grasping both hands of her teacher, and pulling her eagerly forward, "do hurry, for they are crowning sister Anne Queen; and oh, that pretty garland is *so* sweet. Come, hurry!" she added, casting an imploring glance at Minda and myself, and the next moment her tiny feet were tripping back.

We passed rapidly on, and all at once came upon the little band of wood nymphs. There they were, scattered over the rich sward, their glad eyes dancing in joyousness, and their sweet, happy faces clothed in smiles, while now and then a golden ray came creeping through the canopy of leaves above, and trembled over the snowy forehead and lingered upon the rosy cheek. The youngest of the company were sitting upon the moss-covered ground, breathing out their gladness in words of childish simplicity, and clapping their little hands, while their beaming eyes often turned toward a group of older girls at a little distance, who seemed very busy, speaking only in gentle murmurs, and their sylph-like figures moving noislessly about the object of their attention, which was entirely hidden from our view. At last, their work completed, the little band separated to the right and left, and we had a full and enchanting view of the youthful Queen. Beautiful she looked, seated upon her grassy platform, with the garland of rose-buds and lilies lightly pressing her brown ringlets, and a faint flush overspreading her cheeks. The smile that lighted up her large, hazel eye, and lay in the dimples about her sweet mouth, was indeed very beautiful. One moment she sat motionless, while a stillness like that of the grave hung about those old woods, and the eyes of all the gathered group dwelt admiringly upon her; then her glance fell upon the loving face of her dear teacher, and, with one bound, she was at her side.

"Come, dear Harriette," she said, leading the unresisting form up to the flower-sprinkled throne, and seating her astonished friend upon the queenly chair. "Come, *you* shall be our May Queen—your sweet face would look so pretty under this beautiful wreath!"

The next moment, the crown was lifted from her own soft curls, and laid lightly over the heavy braids of Harriette's jetty hair, while the face that blushed and glowed, and the eyes that beamed beneath it, were those of angel loveliness. She opened her laughing lips to remonstrate, but her low tones were lost amid the shout which rung out from that merry band, as they clapped their snowy hands, and their "Long live the Queen!" resounded over the calm bosom of the peaceful lake and up through the interwoven branches of the thick grove, till echo brought back from the arching skies and the mountain side the faint and silvery notes, and "Long live our Queen," seemed whispered by the rustling leaves and the murmur of the rill. Then the glad-hearted children surrounded their beloved teacher, some hanging about her neck, and some sitting at her feet, with their languishing eyes fixed upon her face, and words of affection flowing from their ruby lips. After a while, the fairy May Queen waved her flowery sceptre over the clustering, curly heads, and, hiding her sweet smiles under the snowy lids which drooped over her dark eyes, rose, with all the grace and dignity of royalty itself, and her gentle voice broke over the silence like the music of a harp touched by zephyr's breath. Her speech was brief, but full of love and gratitude and gentle teachings, and when she sat down, the deathly hush of all that childish train told its effect upon their young hearts. All at once, one soft, tremulous voice broke the spell, and immediately all joined in the song, and Minda and I held our breath to catch the thrilling melody.

We crown thee Queen—
Thou with the dark hair and gentle eye;
The ivy green
Is twined with the rose-bud of delicate dye;

The lily too
With its snowy bosom all wet with dew—
And violets
From their shady nook we 've culled for you.

We 've wandered o'er
The soft green meadows in quest of flowers,
And by the shore
Of lake and stream, for many long hours;
Then sat us down
In this cool, and sweet, and shadowy place,
To weave a crown—
A beautiful garland—for thy dear face.

The lily fair,
With its leaves all spotless, and pure and white,
In thy dark hair
Looks forth like a spirit of beauty and light;
The sweet blush rose
Has nestled beside thy soft bright cheek,
And violet
Looks forth from its curtain with glances meek.

Oh, touch her brow
With a light, soft pressure, sweet wreath of flowers!
And whisper low
Of hope and comfort in future hours;
From her fond heart,
Oh, banish each feeling of grief and care!
And never depart,
The deep, pure thoughts thou hast planted there!

The song ceased; but the fluttering birds, who with us had held their breath, soon caught the dying echo, and another chorus arose far up in the shady trees, not more sweet and thrilling than the bird-like music they tried to imitate. A few moments more, and the little hands of the busy throng had spread over the bright carpeted ground a snowy cloth, and brought forward from the shadows of the huge trunks their baskets filled with refreshments, and we seated ourselves upon the soft turf with hearts brimful of joy and gladness.

The sun had sunk behind the hills, and his bright rays ceased to flood the grove with golden light, when we passed from the deep shadow of the forest, and slowly took our way homeward. Every young heart was satisfied, for it had had its fulness of joy; and, though the wreathing smile had departed, and given place to a look of calm contented enjoyment, the fond and beaming eye was expressive of the peace and happiness within.

Days and weeks passed away, and the youthful school-mistress mingled with her childish train, ever joyous, ever smiling. They had learned to love her with an all-absorbing affection, and were always happy beneath her smile and approving glance. She was our favorite friend and companion—Minda's and mine; and in our morning rambles and evening walks, was ever by our side. Her foot was nimblest in climbing the steep mountain's side, and her laugh merriest on its top; and it was her hand which always culled the fairest blossoms, and her white brow that wore them. Sometimes, when the smile was brightest in her dark eye, and the laugh on her red lip clearest and merriest, we have whispered in her ear a name—one little name—which brought the blood from her leaping heart to neck, cheek and brow, and made the joyous laugh die away in a low, tremulous murmur. Yes—there was a charm in that name more powerful than all surrounding influences, and after it fell upon her ear, her voice was always lower and sweeter, and the beautiful smile fainter—but oh, how expressive!

Dear Harriette! I remember well one evening—it was a calm moonlight night—we had wandered far over the mountain's summit, had plucked many flowers, the sweetest and rarest in all that region, and, with our arms full of the bright things, had descended to the clump of oaks just at the foot of the hill. Here we laid our burden on the green sward, streaked all over with silver threads, formed by the moon's pale rays penetrating the large, clustering leaves above, and, kneeling around the tempting pile, we framed a wreath of exquisite beauty, made up of opening buds and fully expanded blossoms of various colors, intermingled with ivy vines and spruce twigs. When the long, rich wreath was finished, we threw it over the white shoulders of Henriette, and our eyes sparkled as we watched its effect upon her graceful figure. A light, musical laugh had just burst from the open lips of our fairy, and its echo was flung back from the dark mountain, when a low footfall sounded along the ground, and the next moment a pair of large, eloquent eyes had brought a flush to the pure brow, and a tremor to the fingers, which clasped the garland, while the laughing orbs hid their intense light beneath their jetty curtains. A smile of exquisite pleasure lay on the lips of the youth, and as he passed to the side of the blushing girl and wound the long, dangling garland about her shoulders, till her slight form was literally buried in its beautiful mantle—all but the lovely face, which looked more lovely than ever—we read in his soul-lit countenance the deep love he bore the pure bright being whom he claimed as his betrothed bride.

We passed silently from the shade of the old oaks, for the heart of each was full—full of gentle, kindly emotions—of poetry and romance. There was a holy hush in the calm air—a soothing power in the soft, peerless face of the silver queen, which gazed upon us from her star-spangled pathway in the blue Heavens; and then the faint, tremulous murmur of the distant river came floating along over the green meadows with a sweet sadness in its tone that seemed to whisper of a purer—a brighter realm, where the beautiful of earth receive that crown of glory which is fadeless and imperishable. The low, trembling "Good night" of Harriette awoke Minda and myself from our pleasant dreams, as we approached the cottage door, and we watched her slight figure leaning upon the arm of her companion, till it was lost in the distance; then with subdued and tranquil feelings went our way.

The last day of summer had glided away; yet its mild breath still lay upon the green fields and hill-sides, and its flowers bloomed beside the path, though we fancied their sweet faces had grown a shade paler, and that their gentle heads drooped a little upon the slight stems. The air was still balmy and refreshing and had it not been for now and then a trembling leaf of red and yellow, which looked out from the deep green of the forest foliage, we could hardly have

believed that those "melancholy days, the saddest of the year," were close upon us.

It was a fresh, bright morning when Minda and I looked out from the half closed blinds of the cottage windows, and anxiously up the road to the school-house door. It was closed; but a troup of fair-haired girls surrounded it, looking now wistfully up to the shaded windows, and then down the pathway toward the sweet home of their worshipped teacher, while their low murmuring voices came floating to our ears, and their sad young faces spoke volumes. At last a slender form came slowly across the green, and neared the little group; a tiny hand brushed the tear-drops from cheeks pale with fear and troubled thoughts, and Mary, the teacher's sweet, fair sister, stood among them. She told them something in husky tones, and then turned away, while every childish face was bathed in tears, as the sobbing little ones went silently to their homes. The warm drops streamed from the bright eyes of Anne and Lizzy, as they told in quivering voices of the illness of dear cousin Henriette; and Maria started to her feet, while a deathly paleness overspread her cheeks, and "Dear Henriette!" trembled on her white lips. The neat little cottage bonnet was soon drawn over her brown hair, and, grasping my hand with her trembling fingers, she drew me along the little foot-path which led across the quiet meadow, and in silence we entered the house of mourning. One moment we stood in the pretty parlor unwelcomed, unnoticed, while a fearful hush pervaded the whole house; then a low, mournful sobbing fell upon our ear, and a voice in broken murmurs came from the little bed-room at our left. We noiselessly opened the door, and stood by the sick girl's side.

There they were, the dear family circle, who but yesterday were happy, and blessed with health and peace;—the father, a man of noble mien and a proud, lofty soul, his ashy face half buried in the heavy folds of the curtains, and a suppressed moan heaving his agitated breast; the mother, with pallid lips and troubled eyes, bending above the couch, despair in every feature, and a voice tremulous but gentle as an infant's; Mary, the sweet young sister, kneeling by the bed-side, and weeping convulsively; and the brother, a manly youth, with the raven locks and full dark eyes of his idol sister, standing by his mother's side, his arms folded on his bosom, and a countenance of ghastly whiteness. And there too lay our own sweet, our precious Harriette, stricken and suffering. The snowy pillow which supported her head was not purer or whiter than her lips and cheek, and the long drooping lashes rested motionless, veiling the wild brightness of the orbs beneath; while the rich, heavy masses of her hair fell like a cloud about her ivory shoulders, and the pale right hand grasped the coverlid with an eager hold. Presently, the ashy lips opened, the quivering lids were slowly raised, and those deep brilliant eyes looked wonderingly round upon the agonized group—from her mother's bending form and tearful face, to the bowed head of her father, and then up into the calm, sad face of her brother, while almost insensibly a beautiful smile stole into her eyes and shed its sunshine over her lovely face. Her lips moved long before any sound broke the spell that lay upon every heart, as we all watched breathlessly her speaking countenance: but at last the sweet melody broke forth, a low, mellow laugh sounded through the room, and words of mingled love and sadness came trembling from her heart.

"Oh! bind it gently on my brow, sweet Minda—that lovely wreath; and mingle with the pale, fair buds this cypress bough. Hush! I heard a step—it was *his*, dear cousin—his own! Hush!—it is gone—I thought him near—that he had come to say *adieu*, and clasp my hand once more, and breathe one word to my heart. There, dearest, that will do—the cypress bough shall rest untouched, but the roses will wither and die."

Poor, sweet Harriette! how we wept to hear her tender ravings, and how her mother's heart bled at every word. Through that long, weary day we watched her every motion—every look; and when the dim shades of evening crept over the little bed-room, and the moon's pale ray quivered upon the marble forehead of the invalid, and her breathing grew deeper and heavier, the old family physician wiped the tear-drops from his furrowed cheek, and turned sadly from the anxious faces bent upon him. There was no hope—the fair, frail flower had bent beneath the blast, and all effort to raise the drooping head was unavailing.

Silently did pain and disease do their cruel work; and, ere many days had passed, we stood around that humble bed, watching with chilled hearts and swollen eyes the death-struggle of the young, the beautiful. A soft, delicate rose-tint came through the muslin curtains, and lingered about each haggard face, while one ray—bright and golden—trembled upon the chill forehead of the dying girl. The dim eyes had been long closed, and the taper fingers folded gently upon the bosom from which the life was slowly gushing; but, all at once the drooping lids were raised, and a look of love—of recognition—beamed from the departing soul upon all around. A holy smile hovered upon the quivering, ashy lip, and a murmur, like the trembling notes of a harp touched by a summer breeze, broke the awful stillness.

"Mother—dear father—adieu! Brother—sweet Mary—farewell! Minda ——"

Another name faltered upon her tongue, and her last look lingered upon that agonized face which bent in its paleness above her head. The spirit had fled; but so quietly, that the sleep which had come over her seemed like a slumber full of beautiful dreams. That heavenly smile never left the cold lips, and the beauty of the marble features was more lovely than when health and gladness shed their lustre there.

Sweet Harriette—a bright, brief day was thine! But, though thy sun went down thus early, it departed without a cloud, and a light is shining round thy pathway now, more brilliant—more intensely beautiful—than in this changing world thy fond heart ever dreamed of. Pure, glorified spirits are thy companions—on thy shining brow is a golden crown, and thy fair fingers have swept the tremulous strings of

that lyre whose thrilling melody fills thy blest abode in Heaven.

They laid the cold, lovely clay in its coffin-bed, put back the clustering black hair from the white brow, and folded the stiffened fingers over the throbless bosom; and, amid the convulsive sobbings of old and young, the solemn hearse, with its covering of black velvet sweeping the fresh green grass, passed through the quiet street, and up by the side of that placid lake and deep grove, to the still grave-yard. "Earth to earth, and dust to dust," was said by the white-haired pastor, and then on the fearful silence broke that dreadful sound which strikes to the heart's core with such a withering weight—the cold earth and chill clods falling upon the coffin-lid. There was a burst of wild agony—a smothered cry—and we left her to her rest.

She lies there now—the velvet turf green and bright above her head, and many a modest flower and opening bud peeping from its rich luxuriance;—a snowy marble gleams out from among the waving boughs of a drooping willow, and a tall rose-bush mingles its blossoms and its leaves, twining along its smooth, pure surface, and almost concealing its simple inscription—"Harriette."

THE HOUSE CLEANING.

BY HARRY SUNDERLAND.

Talk of a washing day! What is that to a whole week of washing days? No, even this gives no true idea of that worst of domestic inflictions a poor man can suffer—house cleaning. The washing is confined to the kitchen or wash-house, and the effect visible in the dining-room is in cold or badly cooked meals; with a few other matters not necessary to mention here. But in house cleaning—oh, dear! Like the dove from the ark, a man finds no place where he can rest the sole of his foot. Twice a year, regularly, have I to pass through this trying ordeal, *willy nilly*, as it is said, in some strange language. To rebel is useless. To grumble of no avail. Up come the carpets, topsy turvy go the furniture, and *swash!* goes the water from garret to cellar. I don't know how other men act on these occasions, but I find discretion the better part of valor, and submission the wisest expedient.

Usually it happens, that my good wife works herself half to death—loses the even balance of her mind—and, in consequence, makes herself and all around her unhappy. To indulge in an unamiable temper is by no means a common thing for Mrs. Sunderland, and this makes its occurrence on these occasions so much the harder to bear. Our last house cleaning took place in the fall. I have been going to write a faithful history of what was said, done, and suffered on the occasion ever since, and now put my design into execution, even at the risk of having my head combed with a three legged stool by my excellent wife, who, when she sees this in print, will be taken, in nautical phrase, all aback. But, when a history of our own short comings, mishaps, mistakes and misadventures will do others good, I am for giving the history and pocketing the odium, if there be such a thing as odium attached to revelations of human weakness and error.

"We must clean house this week," said my good wife, one morning as we sat at the breakfast table—"everything is in a dreadful condition. I can't look at nor touch anything without feeling my flesh creep."

I turned my eyes, involuntarily, around the room. I was not, before, aware of the filthy state in which we were living. But not having so good "an eye for dirt" as Mrs. Sunderland, I was not able, even after having my attention called to the fact, to see "the dreadful condition" of things. I said nothing, however, for I never like to interfere in my wife's department. I assume it is a fact that she knows her own business better than I do.

Our domestic establishment consisted of a cook, chambermaid and waiter. This was an ample force, my wife considered, for all purposes of house cleaning, and had so announced to the individuals concerned some days before she mentioned the matter incidentally to me. We had experience, in common with others, on our troubles with servants, but were now excellently well off in this respect. Things had gone on for months with scarcely a jar. This was a pleasant feature in affairs, and one upon which we often congratulated ourselves.

When I came home at dinner time, on the day the anticipated house cleaning had been mentioned to me, I found my wife with a long face.

"Are you not well?" I asked.

"I'm well enough," Mrs. Sunderland answered, "but I'm out of all patience with Ann and Hannah."

"What is the matter with them?" I asked, in surprise.

"They are both going at the end of this week."

"Indeed! How comes that? I thought they were very well satisfied."

"So they were, all along, until the time for house cleaning approached. It is too bad!"

"That's it—is it?"

"Yes. And I feel out of all patience about it. It shows such a want of principle."

"Is John going too?" I asked.

"Dear knows! I expect so. He's been as sulky as he could be all the morning—in fact, ever since I told him that he must begin taking up the carpets to-morrow and shake them."

"Do you think Ann and Hannah will really go?" I asked.

"Of course they will. I have received formal notice to supply their places by the end of this week, which I must do, somehow or other."

The next day was Thursday, and, notwithstanding both cook and chambermaid had given notice that they were going on Saturday, my wife had the whole house knocked into *pi* as the printers say, determined to get all she could out of them.

When I made my appearance at dinner time I found all in precious confusion, and my wife heated and worried excessively. Nothing was going on right. She had undertaken to get the dinner, in order that Ann and Hannah might proceed uninterruptedly in the work of house cleaning; but as Ann and Hannah had give notice to quit in order to escape this very house cleaning, they were in no humor to put things a head. In consequence, they had "poked about and done nothing," to use Mrs. Sunderland's own language; at which she was no little incensed.

When evening came, I found things worse. My wife had set her whole force to work upon our chamber, early in the day, in order to have it finished as quickly as possible, that it might be in a sleeping condition by night—dry and well aired. But, instead of this, Ann and Hannah had "dilly dallied" the whole day over cleaning the paint, and now the floor was not even washed up. My poor wife was in a sad way about it; and I am sure that I felt uncomfortable enough. Afraid to sleep in a damp chamber, we put two sofas together in the parlor, and passed the night there.

The morning rose cloudily enough. I understood matters clearly. If Mrs. Sunderland had hired a couple of women for two or three days to do the cleaning, and got a man to shake the carpets, nothing would have been heard about the sulkiness of John, or the notice to quit of cook and chambermaid. Putting upon them the task of house cleaning, was considered an imposition, and they were not disposed to stand it.

"I shall not be home to dinner to-day," I said, as I rose from the breakfast table. "As you are all in so much confusion, and you have to do the cooking, I prefer getting something to eat down town."

"Very well," said Mrs. Sunderland—"so much the better"

I left the house a few minutes afterward, glad to get away. Everything was confusion; and every face under a cloud.

"How are you getting along?" I asked, on coming home at night.

"Humph! Not getting along at all!" replied Mrs. Sunderland, in a fretful tone. "In two days, the girls might have thoroughly cleaned the house from top to bottom, and what do you think they have done? Nothing at all!"

"Nothing at all? They must have done something."

"Well, next to nothing, then. They havn't finished the front and back chambers. And what is worse; Ann has gone away sick, and Hannah is in bed with a real or pretended sick-headache."

"Oh, dear!" I ejaculated, involuntarily.

"Now aint things in a pretty way?"

"I think they are," I replied, and then asked—"what are you going to do?"

"I have sent John for old Jane who helped us clean house last spring. But, as likely as not, she's at work somewhere."

Such was in fact the case, for John came in a moment after with that consoling report.

"Go and see Nancy, then," my wife said, sharply, to John, as if he were to blame for Jane's being at work.

John turned away slowly and went on his errand, evidently in not the most amiable mood in the world. It was soon ascertained that Nancy couldn't come.

"Why can't she come?" inquired my wife.

"She says she's doing some sewing for herself, and can't go out this week," replied John.

"Go and tell her that she must come. That my house is upside down, and both the girls are sick."

But Nancy was in no mood to comply. John brought back another negative.

"Go and say to her John that I will not take no for an answer. That she must come. I will give her a dollar a day."

This liberal offer of a dollar a day was effective. Nancy came and went to work on the next morning. Of course, Ann did not come back; and as it was Hannah's last day, she felt privileged to have more headache than was consistent with cleaning paint or scrubbing floors. The work went on, therefore, very slowly.

Saturday night found us without cook or chambermaid, and with only two rooms in order in the whole house, viz: one chamber on the second story. By great persuasion, Nancy was induced to stay during Sunday and cook for us.

An advertisement in the newspaper on Monday morning, brought us a couple of raw Irish girls, who were taken as better than nobody at all. With these new recruits, Mrs. Sunderland set about getting things "to right." Nancy plodded on, so well pleased with her wages, that she continued to get the work of one day lengthened out into two, and so managed to get a week's job.

For the whole of another precious week we were in confusion.

"How do your new girls get along?" I asked of my wife, upon whose face I had not seen a smile for ten days.

"Don't name them, Mr. Sunderland! They're not worth the powder it would take to shoot them. Lazy, ignorant, dirty, good-for-nothing creatures. I wouldn't give them house room."

"I'm sorry to learn that. What will you do?" I said.

"Dear knows! I was so well suited in Ann and Hannah, and, to think that they should have served me so! I wouldn't have believed it of them. But they are all as destitute of feeling and principle as they can be. And John continues as sulky as a bear. He pretended to shake the carpets, but you might get a wheelbarrow load of dirt out of them. I told him so, and the impudent fellow replied that he didn't know anything about shaking carpets; and that it wasn't the waiter's place, any how."

"He did?"

"Yes, he did. I was on the eve of ordering him to leave the house."

"I'll save you that trouble," I said, a little warmly.

"Don't say anything to him, if you please, Mr. Sunderland," returned my wife. "There couldn't be a better man about the house than he is, for all ordinary purposes. If we should lose him, we shall never get another half so good. I wish I'd hired a man to shake the carpets at once; they would have been much better done, and I should have had John's cheerful assistance about the house, which would have been a great deal."

That evening I overheard, accidentally, a conversation between John and the new girls, which threw some light upon the whole matter.

"John," said one of them. "What made Mrs. Sunderland's cook and chambermaid go aff and lave her right in the middle of house clainin'?"

"Because, Mrs. Sunderland, instead of hiring a woman, as every lady does, tried to put it all off upon them."

"Indade! And was that it?"

"Yes, it was. They never thought of leaving until they found they were to be imposed upon. And, to save fifty cents or a dollar, she made me shake the carpets. I never did such a thing in my life before. I think I managed to leave about as much dirt in as I shook out. But I'll leave the place before I do it again."

"So would I, John. It was a downright, mane imposition, so it was. Set a waiter to shaking carpets."

"I don't think much has been saved," remarked the waiter, "for Nancy has had a dollar a day ever since she has been here."

"Indade!"

"Yes; and besides that, Mrs. Sunderland has had to work like a dog herself. All this might have been saved, if she had hired a couple of women at sixty-two and a half cents a day for two or three days, and paid for having the carpets shaken. That's the way other people do. The house would have been to rights in three or four days, and everything going on like clock work."

I heard no more. I wanted to hear no more. It was all as clear as day to me. When I related to Mrs. Sunderland what John had said, she was, at first, quite indignant. But the reasonableness of the thing soon became so apparent that she could not but acknowledge that she had acted very unwisely.

"This is another specimen of your saving at the spiggot," I said, playfully.

"There, Mr. Sunderland! Not a word more, if you please, of that," she returned, her cheek more flushed than usual. "It is my duty, as your wife, to dispense with prudence in your household; and if, in seeking to do so, I have run a little into extremes, I think it ill becomes you to ridicule or censure me. Dear knows! I have not sought my own ease or comfort in the matter."

"My dear, good wife," I quickly said, in a soothing voice, "I have neither meant to ridicule nor censure you. Nothing was further from my thoughts."

"You shall certainly have no cause to complain of me on this score again," she said, still a little warmly. "When next we clean house, I will take care that it shall be done by extra help altogether."

"Do so by all means, Mrs. Sunderland. Let there be, if possible, two paint cleaners and scrubbers in every room, that the work may all be done in a day instead of a week. Take my word for it, the cost will be less. Or, if double, I will cheerfully pay it for the sake of seeing 'order from chaos rise' more quickly than is wont under the ordinary system of doing things."

My wife did not just like this speech, I could see, but she bit her lips and kept silent.

In a week we were without a cook again; and months passed before we were in anything like domestic comfort. At last my wife was fortunate enough to get Ann and Hannah back again, and then the old pleasant order of things was restored. I rather think, that we shall have a different state of things at next house cleaning time. I certainly hope so.

IDA NORTON.

BY MISS LOUISE OLIVIA HUNTER.

"Be it as you wish, Ida."

The words were uttered in a cold, calm tone, and the speaker, Arthur Norton, turned hastily away to conceal the emotion that rested upon his countenance.

His young and beautiful wife was seated upon a sofa at a short distance from him. Her cheek was very pale, while her dark eyes flashed angrily upon her companion, and their expression betrayed that all the warmth of her nature had been called forth by the conversation which had just passed between them. In the height of her anger she had demanded a separation, and he—had assented to it! And the causes were these.

The preceding night, Norton had accompanied his wife to a party given by a lady in the neighborhood. The rooms were both crowded and heated, and feeling oppressed with the warmth, he had left Ida talking to a lady friend, and retired for a few moments to an open window. While seated here, concealed from view by the folds of the curtain, a party of gentleman stationed themselves near and began to converse. The subject of their remarks was a young married lady, who was present that evening, but whom they did not name. They spoke of her extreme beauty, her wealth, and her accomplishments, and then followed certain observations concerning her husband's blindness to her intimacy with a man of known profligacy of character. And while they conversed, one of the party pointed out the lady to a companion, and described the precise place where she sat. Not caring to become a listener any longer, Norton was about to move away when the names of the persons referred to met his ear. They were Mrs. Norton—even his own wife and Charles Clifford.

A sickening sensation stole over Arthur Norton's heart as this fearful discovery came upon him—for he felt that though Ida was not guilty, she was thoughtlessly exposing herself to the sneers and insults of the world. Very often had he warned her against being upon intimate terms with Charles Clifford—but Ida had known Clifford from her childhood, and regarded him with a sister's partiality, while she despised the world's opinion too heartily, for its sake to treat with coldness one whom she had always looked upon as a brother.

Ida had thought her husband much changed of late. Though they had been wedded scarcely a year, he no longer greeted her with that impassioned ardor which he had manifested during the days of courtship. She was the only child of a parent who idolized her, and whose fond affection for her showed itself in an almost lover-like devotion to her every wish—and being thus accustomed in her own home to hearing continually the language of adulation, her heart continually craved the same from him to whom she was united. And when by degrees it became less frequently accorded her, forgetting that Norton was no longer the lover but the husband, she began to imagine that he did not love her with that warmth for which she pined. Too proud to tell him her thoughts, she became cold and reserved toward him, and thus Norton was led to think from her chilling demeanor, that she had never truly cared for him, and now regretted her error in choosing the first one on whom her youthful fancy had alighted. Arthur Norton was passionately attached to his wife—but his feelings toward her did not often betray themselves in words—and it was these that Ida missed.

Charles Clifford, who has previously been alluded to, was the ward of Ida Norton's father. He had been associated with her constantly from childhood, and had regarded her with a deeper feeling than she was at all aware of. When Ida was in her sixteenth year, Clifford had just attained his majority, and then following the counsels of his guardian, he left his native land for a tour through Europe. The image of the lovely Ida was constantly in his thoughts during his sojourn abroad—and it became the hope of his heart that on his return she would become his wife. After a protracted absence of four years, Clifford once more found himself in the city of his birth—but alas! Ida was now the betrothed of another, and he arrived but in time to witness the celebration of the marriage ceremony. Concealing the disappointment that rankled in his bosom, Clifford mingled gaily among the guests, and received with a smiling lip the frank and affectionate welcome of the bride—but his heart throbbed with a thousand bitter emotions as he gazed upon the happy countenance of Arthur Norton, and a wild wish took possession of his soul for power to rob the bridegroom of the treasure that had just been committed to his keeping.

Regarding Clifford in the light she did, without thought of wrong Ida had often complained to him of her husband's change of manner, and with the eagerness of a selfish and revengeful nature, he gladly availed himself of this opportunity for sowing the seeds of discord between Norton and his wife, and while he artfully sympathized with her, managed to interweave insinuations concerning Arthur, in such a manner that the young and inexperienced Ida felt the sting, yet laid no blame on him who gave it. Charles Clifford was indeed a profligate. While he mixed with the society of Europe, he had beheld much to weaken his trust in woman—and when he daily listened to the repinings of Ida Norton he began

to imagine that she in reality loved him, and was but waiting for him to make advances that would induce her to leave her husband's roof forever.

There was also another cause that since her marriage had rendered Ida Norton's home uncomfortable. Her husband's mother had always been particularly averse to her daughter-in-law. The elder Mrs. Norton possessed a stern, haughty, exacting spirit. She was from the first prejudiced against Ida—for it was not her wish that Arthur should marry. She was devotedly attached to her son, and feared that when he brought his new idol to his home he would learn to look upon his parent with less love than formerly. And when the marriage took place, and her son's wife was constantly near her, the faults of that somewhat spoiled, but warm-hearted being, were continually frowned upon by the mother. To a gentle expostulation Ida would willingly have lent her attention and profited—but her proud spirit refused to bend where it met with nothing but cold looks and harsher manners. And so between the two there was ever a reserve, and though Ida would not acknowledge it even to herself, the dignified mien of her husband's mother not unfrequently sent a chill to her heart.

Let us return now to the spot where we left Norton. For a long time he remained in his hiding-place, not daring to stir lest he should be discovered—but at length the party moved away, and then very cautiously he came forward, and glanced in the direction where his wife had been described as sitting. She was still there, and Clifford too was beside her. He was conversing to her in a low tone—her delicate hand rested confidingly in his, and those speaking eyes gazed earnestly into his face.

Norton was too noble to wrong his wife by a thought of jealousy—he knew that she merely felt a sister's affection for Clifford—yet he could not help confessing to himself that her situation was such as to attract the suspicions of those who knew not as he did, the purity of her soul. The thought that one so dear to him was even now the object of censure, stung his sensitive heart deeply. His resolve was immediately taken. He would bear her away that very instant—she should remain there no longer to be exposed to the ill-natured remarks of the world. With a pale cheek he now approached to her side, and whispered a request that she should accompany him home. Ida raised her eyes wonderingly to his face for a moment—then hastily rising she bade Clifford good evening, and taking her husband's arm, they left the crowded assembly. During the ride homeward both were silent. Ida, with her usual pride, disdained asking the reason for their abrupt departure, though she was waiting with impatience for her husband to explain it—while Norton did not do so because he wished to delay an explanation till the morrow, for he feared that if he told Ida all then, her impulsive nature would lead her to wrong conclusions, and perhaps cause her to say that which could never be forgotten. Once or twice before the carriage stopped at their residence, Norton hazarded a remark upon other topics, but Ida deeming that he had acted strangely and capriciously, persisted in maintaining a sullen silence.

That night neither closed their eyes in slumber. Ida spent the hours in tears—Norton in meditation, and he determined that the next morning his wife should know the reason for his conduct the preceding night, and that he would then learn, if possible, the cause of her late coldness toward himself. Accordingly the next day, when the evening meal was over, and he found himself alone with Ida, he unfolded what had till then seemed so inexplicable to her. She heard him in silence, and when he had finished and once more besought her to avoid Charles Clifford for the future, a sudden suspicion flashed across her mind that Norton while giving her the world's opinion, was also shadowing forth his own. The very thought that her husband did not trust in her, was maddening to a spirit like Ida Norton's—and as Arthur ceased speaking, and looked eagerly into the face of his wife as if awaiting a reply, the blood came rushing in a crimson torrent to her brow, and in an excited tone she exclaimed, "I cannot, and will not endure this longer! I must leave this house—I will go again to my father's—to my own dear home where I was so happy till you, Arthur Norton, came there to destroy my peace forever. If you desire it I will never again countenance the one whom you have so basely calumniated—but I ask in return that you will consent to a separation between us"

Surprised, stunned and grief-struck, Norton had not at first power to answer her. But quickly recovering, and deeming her request merely a pretext to rid herself of the presence of a husband whom she did not love, he resolved to hide his emotion, and calmly and coldly his sanction was given to the arrangement, though all the while his heart was breaking.

That evening as Charles Clifford was preparing for a party, a note was handed him, which, on opening, he found to be from Ida Norton. Every circumstance of the affair above recorded, she now placed before him with her customary frankness, concluding by begging him in accordance with the promise given to her husband, never to come near her if he valued her future happiness. A triumphant smile appeared upon Clifford's countenance as he read—for he imagined that for him she had left Arthur Norton, and that the misunderstanding between the two was an artful invention on the part of Ida. So he very resolutely determined to abstain from visiting her for a short period, hoping that during his absence she would learn his value, and welcome him warmly, when, after a sufficient time had elapsed, they should again meet.

Just six weeks after the events last recorded, Ida Norton was seated in one of the apartments of her father's stately mansion, absorbed in a deep reverie. Her face wore an expression of settled melancholy—for not a single moment's happiness had been hers since her separation from her husband. Too late she learned how well she loved him—but the belief that he was indifferent to her affection wounded her to the soul. She felt that she had been in fault in not sooner relinquishing the society of Clifford as he desired it—yet still she was convinced that the latter had been condemned unjustly, and this conviction was strengthened by the obedience of Charles to her desire—for not since that day had he sought her presence.

She was at length aroused from her musings by a low knock at the door, and in another moment Clifford entered and sprang to her side, while he seized her hand and covered it with passionate kisses.

"Ida! my own, beautiful Ida!" he exclaimed, in a tone of impassioned tenderness, "I could be parted from you no longer. Oh, Ida, you little know the love that dwells within my heart if you deem that I could obey your wish. And it was *not* your wish, was it my Ida? Nay, your averted face tells me the sweet truth."

Her face was indeed averted, but it was only to hide the glow of shame that she felt—shame that she had ever thought of as a brother, one so utterly base and unworthy. But as his last words fell upon her ear, she again turned toward him—the bright flush had faded from her cheek, and Clifford started at the sight of that colorless face.

"Charles Clifford!" she said, and her sweet voice was strangely stern, "for your sake I have forsaken the noble husband whom I loved—forsaken him because he did but point out to his thoughtless wife the precipice on whose verge she was treading—forsaken him because he told me the truth, that *you* were what I could not believe, yet what you have now proved yourself to be—a sinful and unprincipled man. Go, Charles, leave me, and revel in the thought that you have forever destroyed the happiness of a sister." And as she ceased, overcome by her feelings, she wept.

Clifford had once really and truly loved the being who sat before him, her beautiful head bowed with despair, and her slight form drooping beneath that burden of hopeless misery. All his better feelings were not quite lost to the voice of conscience, and he was at once touched and awed by her grief. Again approaching he would have taken her hand, but she moved shrinkingly away, while a visible shudder crept over her.

"Ida," he said, "Ida, forgive and listen to me. I have indeed regarded you with unworthy thoughts—but I deemed that you loved me—that for my sake you left your husband's dwelling——"

"Seek not to palliate your fault, Charles Clifford," she interrupted—"I have never loved any but my husband. And even had I been the sinful being you thought me," she added, in a broken tone, "I had no mother to counsel and guide me, and it should have been *your* task to warn me of the gulf I was approaching. And now, leave me. Go—I would be alone."

Her command was obeyed—and when the form of her companion had disappeared, Ida again bowed her head upon her hands and resigned herself wholly to that overwhelming sense of misery. An hour passed, and still she remained thus—but suddenly a brighter expression irradiated her countenance, and hastily rising she equipped herself for a walk, and with a hurried step left the apartment.

A few minutes afterward she stood at the door of that mansion where the days of her wedded life had passed. It was opened by a strange servant, and without heeding the look of inquiry he cast upon her, Ida rushed quickly past him and bent her steps toward the library, where at this hour she knew she was most likely to find her husband. The door of the apartment was partly open—and looking stealthily in Ida beheld—not Arthur Norton—but his stern, proud mother! Her face was buried in her hands, while her frame shook as if convulsed with some deep, heart-rending grief. Shocked and alarmed at the sight, Ida stole softly toward her, and forgetting for an instant her own peculiar situation, she threw her arms around the drooping form and muttered, "mother!"

Hastily that proud lady raised her head—coldly she unclasped the snowy arms that encircled her, and shrank shudderingly from that embrace as though a serpent had just enfolded her in its loathsome coils, while for an instant her lips moved and then closed tightly together, as though she had the will but not the power to speak.

"Mother—mother look not thus upon me," pleaded the low, sweet tones of Ida, "I know that I have erred—but I repent, oh! *so* bitterly—and I have come home again to bind up the hearts I have heedlessly wounded. Mother, say that you forgive me—and henceforth I will not swerve in the duty I owe to my husband."

"Your husband!" and there was bitter scorn in the mother's voice, "girl—*I* can neither pardon or forget—and to the words of forgiveness you would fain hear from *his* lips, you will never listen."

"Mother," she replied, in a tone of child-like confidence, "he must, he *will* forgive me. I will tell him all—how I once foolishly deemed him cold, though I am sure now he always loved me—and how very, very sorry I am that I have ever grieved him thus. And I will promise that if he will but forgive me this once I will never more wrong him—I will even be content to seclude myself from all the world, and live for him alone. And if that avails not—though I am certain it will," and a bright, sweet smile crossed her face, "I will kneel to him—*I* whom they call so proud—*I* who have never knelt to mortal being—I will kneel to *him*, and think you he will spurn me?"

"And yet, girl, believe me the word you desire will never pass his lips!" How strange and mocking were those tones—and yet they caused not a fear, nor raised a doubt of evil in Ida Norton's bosom.

"Where is he?—lead me to him," were the words that now fell from her lips—"you shall listen to my pleadings, mother, and if there be any love left in his heart he will not turn away from me. And if he does I can but die." Her voice faltered—but the heart of her companion was hardened against her, and she bade Ida follow her, while she felt no remorse for the cruel act she was about to commit, deeming it a meet punishment for the offences of her companion.

Silently they ascended the stairs, and suddenly Mrs. Norton paused at the door of what had once been Ida's sitting-room. And now how wildly throbbed the young wife's heart as she felt that she would soon gaze once more upon the face of her husband! Slowly the door was turned upon its hinges, and Ida entered the apartment that in other days had been her own.

In a darkened corner of the room upon a low couch reclined a well known form—but he did not raise his head nor move as she approached. Surely he slept! Nearer and nearer she drew toward him, till at last

she could look down upon that beloved and familiar countenance. *And still he stirred not!* Suddenly a fearful pain shot through Ida's heart—for as she gazed upon that ashy face, and marked those closed and sunken eyes, the truth dawned upon her spirit, and she felt that she was in the presence of the dead!

With a strange calmness that fair young creature stood there—her eyes riveted upon the corpse of her husband. Once she bent over and pressed her lips upon the pallid brow—and then turning to the stern woman who stood unpityingly beside her, she asked in a low, hollow tone—"how died he?"

"How died he?" repeated the mother, while the deep flush of excitement mantled her cheek, "how died he? His heart was broken. He cherished a serpent and it stung him. The trusting dove brought a mate to its dwelling, but it took to itself wings and left him alone to pine and die. How died he? Girl, girl—behold *your* work!"

Wild, stinging, cruel as were her words, they were the outpourings of a mother's grief beside the death-couch of her only child, and to the one who in life had deserted him. Scarcely had her accents died away when a deeper pallor overspread the face of her young companion—step by step she sank to the floor, while a dark stream of life-blood oozed slowly from her mouth, crimsoning the snowy garments of the dead, and deluging the carpet beneath her. One thrilling cry—one half-smothered gasp—and all was over! The innocent yet erring wife lay motionless beside the noble and departed husband—and the meeting denied on earth was doubtless accorded them in Heaven.

THE INNKEEPER'S WIFE.

A STORY OF THE REVOLUTION.

BY JOSEPH B. COBB, ESQ., AUTHOR OF THE "MAID OF MELAS," &C. &C.

CHAPTER I.

In Prince Edward county, Virginia, within a short distance of the Court House, and a few miles only from Hampden Sydney College, stands a venerable edifice, known to this day as Moore's old Ordinary, or in Virginia parlance, *Or'nary*. Anterior to the War of the Revolution, and during the whole of that eventful struggle, it had been a favored resort of the travellers, and of the soldiers passing to or from the scene of action.

During the war, the proprietor of this ancient establishment was Major Joseph Moore, an Englishman by birth, but known throughout the struggle for independence as an unwavering and active whig, though holding no office in the army, or under Congress. In times of dismay and general misgiving, when the Old Dominion was crowded with hostile troops, and the wearied, half-famished troops of Greene and Lafayette were everywhere driven before their victorious arms—this old gentleman took heart of grace by greeting daily with his morning cup a miserably painted picture of Gen. Washington which adorned his parlor mantle, and encouraged his desponding neighbors by examples of daring and ceaseless activity in serving the good cause. He had provoked, to an irreparable extent, the vengeance of the British and Hessian officers, not only by adroitly eluding their most cautious searches, but by his zeal in forwarding provisions of food and clothing to the suffering troops of his adopted country. From the beginning, he had calculated the price of his adhesion to the colonial authorities, and bravely resolved to meet the issue of his patriotic decision by the sacrifice of all he owned, if such became necessary. Whilst his pursuers were in the neighborhood, he was often forced to take to the woods with his negroes and stock, where he would live for days and weeks in a large cave, the existence of which was known to none but staunch friends.

When it is told, that during these ever recurring absences, the young wife of this determined whig resolutely kept by her troubled board, steadily discharging her duties as mistress and landlady, it will easily be conjectured that she could have been none but an extraordinary woman, such as, in those days, stamped an undying influence on their neglected and underrated sex. The writer of this sketch recalls at this period with peculiar pleasure, not unmixed with some pride, many a tale of the heroic fortitude and Spartan courage which distinguished his venerable ancestress, and charmed many an hour of his youthful days. She was emphatically *a woman of the Revolution.*

Unlike her husband, who was originally a ship-builder, she was well-born, and inherited an ample fortune. In the earlier years of marriage she had to endure the reflection, not a little mortifying to her pride, of being thought wedded to a man rather beneath her station and pretensions. But after the war broke out, and laudations were showered on her husband for his indomitable exertions, both by his neighbors and by officers of the army who had experienced the benefit of his aid, all pompous clamor was silenced, and his station was considered suited to any family. Pope's famous couplet was never more strikingly illustrated than by his history.

> "Honor and worth from no condition rise;
> Act well your part, there all the honor lies."

The year 1781 was prolific in important events for American Independence, and Virginia was all anxiety. On one side she was held in terror by the haughty and ruthless Hessians under Sir Henry Clinton, expecting hourly invasion and devastation; whilst on the other, the fierce veterans of Cornwallis and the "invincible legion" of Tarleton threatened to crush all within their reach. Greene's army, that heroic column which had fought through all obstacles, and suffered and bled in utter despair of all relief; which had defied the discipline of British regulars, the pangs of famine, the fury of the elements, the pitiless severity of the seasons, naked and half armed, and had triumphed over all; this army, hotly pursued by Cornwallis, was in the neighborhood. In the very sight, and under the guns of their incensed enemy, they had crossed the Dan, and the whole country rang with shouts of exultation at the brilliant feat. The sturdy whig population of the surrounding counties poured out *en masse*, to relieve their wants in food, clothing and accoutrements. The expiring spark of patriotism was rekindled, and the torch of freedom and of the revolution burned with new vigor.

As may be supposed, these circumstances and their results, so well calculated to countervail the recent depression, which was vainly thought the prelude to universal dismay and submission, greatly exasperated the British leaders, and they wreaked vengeance in ways utterly repugnant to all rules of civilized warfare, and degrading to humanity. Houses were ransacked, beds ripped open, furniture spoiled, and provisions and property destroyed without discrimination and without mercy. Parties were sent to scour the country, who scrupled not to murder or imprison the men, and to insult the women. It was a time for the daughters of America to summon all their fortitude; for husbands, fathers and brothers, unprepared to provide for or protect them under the rapid assaults and sudden onsets of the British cavalry, were forced without choice or remedy, to leave them to wha[t]

meagre courtesy and forbearance their sex or their situation could extract from their fierce invaders. Nor did woman's fortitude and courage fail or flinch in these appalling emergencies.

Now it so happened, that on a cold night in the year above named, whilst our family at the Ordinary were quietly seated around the cheerful fireside, engaged doubtless in recounting the stirring news developed at each day's close, a negro who had been on the look out, entered breathless and trembling, with the unwelcome and ever terrifying announcement, that "the red coats under Tarleton were in the neighborhood, and might ride up at any moment." All was instantly alarm and confusion. The wife refused to sleep in such suspense, and bracing herself against the depressing effects of unnecessary fear, actively abetted her husband in his preparations for flight. In a short time all was ready, and filled with melancholy presages, the husband and wife bade a silent adieu, each resolved to encounter with firmness their respective duties and difficulties. Not a living thing which could lay claim to the name of property was left on the premises, if we except an old negro and his wife who volunteered to remain with their mistress. But the provisions which had been stored away for the American troops, and for the accommodation of such travellers as might venture abroad in these times of gloom and terror, were left exposed; and the spacious cellar was filled with barrels of peach brandy, distilled at home, and carefully reserved for the same purposes. To save a portion of these was now the most anxious object with Mrs. Moore—to save all was entirely out of the question. In view of her slender resources, she instantly resolved to leave the cribs and granaries to fare as they might, and directed her whole thoughts and means to the preservation of her stores in the cellar. She at once calculated that the whole troop would be breakfasted at her expense, and this she resolved to offer with cheerfulness. Unprovided with means of transportation, it could hardly be supposed that cavalry would or could carry away more than would answer temporarily, being so far too from the main body of the army. To prevent destruction of what was left, was, therefore, the important question. She was sure that the liquor could not escape, and in daily expectation that Colonel Washington would be passing, (who was attempting to check the rapacity of the enemy) she was most anxious to preserve full rations for his weary and patriotic band.

Leaving her children to the care of the faithful negress, she descended, candle in hand, accompanied by her servant, to the cellar beneath. Within this was an apartment back, divided by a thick wall, and to which no light was admitted. Here was always stored the brandy, which, thus secured, was left to mellow and to purify. Her excellent sense at once suggested that this secluded stronghold, together with the pleasant and captivating *effluvia* which exuded from its every crack or crevice, would be most sure to attract, and probably *distract* the attention of the robbers who were shortly expected. Applying the key to the iron-faced door, which looked as though it might resist the strongest efforts if stormed, she directed the astonished servant to roll out a number of the choice barrels. These she strewed in different parts of the open room, taking care to conceal them partially by carelessly throwing over them pieces of hoops and staves or mill-dewed straw, in such manner as to create the impression that they were nothing more than heaps of useless rubbish. After the same fashion she also adroitly disguised several barrels of pork and flour, to guard against contingencies. This, though simple in every particular, was a remarkable instance of self-possession in a matron not much exceeding the age of twenty-five, and so perilously situated. Having done all she could do, and again locking the door, she put the key in her basket and re-entered her chamber. Her children were quietly sleeping on their pallet, and anxious but resolved, she lay down undressed by their side, not to sleep, but to await the event, as became a wife, a mother, and a woman of America.

CHAPTER II.

True to his accustomed activity, by early dawn on the day following, Tarleton had broken up his bivouac, and before the sun mounted over the surrounding hills, was on his march for the Ordinary. A dense fog covered the whole space around, and his approach was known only from the rumbling echo of hoofs as the squadron gallopped over the frozen ground. Foremost came a corperal with his advanced guard, to make known the orders of his imperious and fierce commander. Early as was the hour, Mrs. Moore had prepared her plan of action, and as the officer entered, unasked and unannounced, was sitting before a huge log fire which blazed in the parlor corner, calmly engaged with her knitting as though peril and insult were not near. On his entrance she rose, but offered no salute or invitation, and the rough soldier swaggered to the fire, where standing with his back to its cheerful blaze, a skirt of his coat banging from each arm, he thus accosted the matron in the rude and discourteous style so common at that time with the British troops.

"Well, madam, where is the infernal old rebel who keeps this house? Answer me quick, for by ——, I'm in no humor for dainty mouthing and silly scenes."

"What mean you, sir?" answered Mrs. Moore, who by the bye was blessed with a full share of temper when excited, as well as spirit to maintain it. "I am not in the habit of hearing or replying to such beastly language."

"You ask what I mean," said the corporal. "I will tell you that I mean your husband, or whatever you are to the rebellious traitor, whose name bangs on yonder sign. If we can lay hands on him, I'll try and raise his head by the side of his name, and ask of you no further aid than the loan of a strong bed cord." And pointing to the beam on the sign-post, he made a significant motion with his hand about his neck, which left no doubt as to the allusion.

This insult, so stinging and so unprovoked, drew an involuntary tear to the eye of the helpless woman, but wisely subduing any appearance of the kind in such company, she turned her back on the ruffian, and walked into her chamber.

At this moment the full, mellow sound of a bugle awakened the echoes of hill and dale, and the whole troop appeared in sight at the head of the lane. The rising sun had dispelled in part the thick mist of the morning, and from a window of her room the lady could catch glimpses of their shining armor as they rapidly advanced. Presently they gallopped full into the yard, and the corporal walked out to meet them.

A towering, stalwart officer, clad in the splendid uniform of a British dragoon, dismounted from his charger, and after exchanging a word with the corporal, advanced toward the doorway, making the oaken floor of the long gallery in front to ring with the clang of his iron-heeled cavalry boots. The huge roan steed, the long, brown hair, and the frightful marks of small-pox which disfigured his otherwise comely face, told at once who this officer was, and, agreeable to the plan she had formed, Mrs. Moore, having a little girl by the hand, and an infant boy in her arms, met him promptly at the hall door.

"Colonel Tarleton, I presume," she said, with a graceful curtsey.

"At your service, madam," was the prompt reply of that celebrated officer. And as he touched the rim of his dragoon cap, he responded to the offer of the lady by seating himself with somewhat of the same familiarity which had distinguished his sub-officer before the parlor fire.

Fierce and unrelenting, though always roughly courteous, the British commander was nevertheless struck with the calm dignity, the stately manner, and somewhat aristocratic demeanor of his landlady, and could not reconcile her appearance with the generally received notions of an innkeeper's wife.

"'Pon honor, madam," said he, "I must say you have there two likely, nice little folks," and offering his hand to the little girl, who readily took it, he at the same time slightly caressed the boy in the mother's arms. With staring eye and trembling lip, the infant pertly struck the hand which he extended, and hid its head in the folds of the mother's shawl.

"Oh, ho," laughed Tarleton, "some of the old leaven, I see. The *red* is too strong for his little *blue* eyes, I suppose, hey, madam," winking knowingly at the mother. "By the way, madam, does the father of this fiery little rebel always leave you to do the honors of his tavern! His faith is tolerably strong considering your age and comeliness. Come, my good madam, tell me, have you locked him in the closet, hid him in the cuddy, or stuffed him under the bed? He has served his mob Congress, and his rebel leaders well enough to receive some attention at my hands."

"I am happy to say, sir," returned the lady, "that my husband is beyond your reach, and I decline for him the attentions you speak of. As to whether I have placed him where you suggest, I presume you will soon find when you commence your usual round of forcing locks, tearing open beds, and burning houses."

"For George, madam, a proper answer from a rebel's wife to an officer in his majesty's service!" said Tarleton, with a mixture of humor and mock severity of tone. "And what if I should do all you have said, how can these daring and obstinate rebels complain who put his majesty to such trouble! Make yourself easy, my good hostess, but I have now no time to parley or play at cross questions with a spirited dame. Work is before me, and work is always first with those under my orders."

At this instant the corporal again entered, and, lifting his cap, approached to where his officer and the lady were sitting. At the sight of her insulter, Mrs. Moore could not repress a slight exclamation. She started back, whilst the fire of injured feeling and outraged delicacy burned in her lustrous eyes, and suffused with a deep crimson hue the cheeks just now pallid almost from the reflection in whose dread presence she stood. All these were not unobserved by the quick glance of Tarleton, who, beyond doubt, had felt his chivalry awakened by the manner and spirit of the woman before him.

"Pray, what is the matter, madam?" he asked. "And what causes you such feeling at the sight of my officer?"

Unabashed, and nerved by the full flow of resentment which lurks in woman's bosom when smarting beneath the rankling of insult and outrage, Mrs. Moore recounted with feeling emphasis the gross language and the offensive allusion which had aroused and embittered her feelings as a wife and mother. As she proceeded, the rigid frown which contracted the brow of Tarleton, and the fury which sparkled from his fierce glance, told that woman had found a protector, and sent a cold shudder to the heart of the brutal offender.

When asked if he admitted the fact, the trooper could not articulate, so firmly had fear and conscious guilt clenched his teeth; and when, in the rage of passion, and with the full sway of a British commanding officer, Tarleton strode forward and struck him, the soldier cowered and shrank beneath the blow like a slave. This was not all. Tarleton caused him to unclasp his sword-belt, and then breaking the weapon before his face, ordered him to the rear under arrest.

These facts being substantially true, serve to relieve in some measure the odium which is generally heaped on the name and memory of this distinguished, though cruel Briton. On this occasion he certainly behaved as a gallant and high-souled officer, jealous of the reputation of his service, though his harsh and summary chastisement of the offender in the presence of a lady, a scene so unsuited to female softness and delicacy, showed in a strong view that impulsive and fierce disposition so characteristic of the man.

This being done, Tarleton resumed his natural humor, and proceeded with his inquiries, as though nothing of an unusual character had happened. And indeed such scenes in the British army, which in the French or American service would have aroused a hurricane of resentment among the junior officers and privates, were by no means uncommon, and account in part for the ruffian dispositions of the soldiery when unchecked by rigid discipline.

"Now, madam," said Tarleton, "since it seems I shall not now have the pleasure of conducting your husband as a prisoner of war to my commanding

officer, I must trouble you to breakfast my squad with a portion of these dainty supplies, which doubtless your good man has left to be distributed to the rebel army, who know so much better how to run than how to fight."

"Do they indeed?" said the matron, emboldened to satire, perhaps, by the consciousness of being in a gentleman's power, and not that of a ruffian, as he had been represented. "Doubtless we poor Americans have been duped by false rumors; but a few weeks since we had news that his majesty's troops fully equalled them in the first, whilst our poor soldiers proved their knowledge of the last quite to the satisfaction of Cornwallis and his officers."

"Ah, you allude to that ridiculous, helter skelter affair at your Cowpens," answered Tarleton, no way confused. "Well, madam, I did my part, as you doubtless heard, and his lordship hopes soon to get this mob enclosed in *pens* something more substantial than where we last had them."

"Report says," retorted the lady, now cruel in turn, "that we have an officer in the American ranks who does not much dread close quarters in the battle, even though he finds himself face to face with a very redoubted adversary."

"Zounds, madam, you tempt me to anger by such a ridiculous tirade," answered he, somewhat moved, though not out of humor. "If ever I can get sight of this namesake of your old rebel chief, I will leave on him a mark by which he can boast to some effect of an encounter."

"In that case," again said the lady, archly smiling, "you and he, from what we hear, will be then fairly at quits, for it is said he has already balanced that score."

The latter part of this conversation is given on testimony not considered altogether reliable in our courts of judicature, though if the report, which has since received the sanction of history, be true, that Tarleton had lost his fingers in a hand to hand fight with Colonel Washington, it is fairly presumable that the rumor was then rife. On this occasion he was gloved and booted, as already remarked, and the wound, if ever inflicted, was not of course visible.

CHAPTER III.

The troop dismounted and arranged to cook and eat their breakfast in the open yard, Tarleton and a few of his higher officers only, partaking their meal in the hall under the invitation and superintendence of their inexplicable hostess. Whilst engaged in discussing, with great apparent pleasure, the substantial repast spread out before them, it is said that Tarleton, with a species of blunt politeness peculiar to him, asked "if he could get a cup of tea."

"A cup of tea!" answered Mrs. Moore. "Colonel Tarleton surely forgets that he is breakfasting with the wife of an American patriot. In these times, too, we have no means of transporting hither the waters in Boston harbor, and they are the only specimen of the article you wish, we have had in this country for many years past."

At this tart but good humored sally, the young officers at table laughed outright, despite the presence of their commander, whose crude and severe notions of loyalty and discipline were understood to be generally averse to the least levity as regarded the course of his superiors, or the action of his government. After gravely rebuking them on this occasion, he replied to the lady of the house in his usual tone, half earnest, half humorous—

"Well, my dear madam," said he, "I only wish those savages had maintained their disguise long enough to allow his majesty's troops an opportunity of tinging the tea of Boston harbor with the color so obnoxious to you Americans. Their blood would have answered the purposely admirably. The Ethiopian may not change his skin, but savages sometimes have been known to do the like, especially when their color was likely to cost them dear."

Breakfast was finished, and the bugle sounded the assembly. The officers were at their respective posts, but Tarleton still remained by the fireside. The troopers were all paraded in line in front of the house, when, at an order from the sergeant, every tenth man dismounted, leaving his horse in charge of his right file. These formed the search corps, a system of domiciliary which was never neglected by Tarleton in these official military visits.

Through the open door the lady of the house had seen this movement, and understood at once its object. Under the direction of the sergeant, this corps filed off toward the lots where the corn, fodder, and various provender were collected and stored. On their return, they seized upon the old negro man and ordered him to conduct them to the store room of the Ordinary and to the cellar. The first of these, like the various houses just left, were noted down in the sergeant's memorandum book. Arrived at the cellar, the sergeant himself led the way. He approached the apparent heaps of rubbish, and with his foot kicked off some of the top coverings, but as the old servant began to dread the failure of his mistress' plan, the keen eye of the soldier was attracted to the iron-faced door of the locked cellar, and followed by his companions, he sprang forward with undisguised ecstacy. But to force it was no easy matter, and the keys were in possession of the landlady. The savoury smell of the brandy excited the keenest appetite, and a most unconquerable thirst. They resolved on a report to the chief, whose influence, it was hoped, might obtain the keys, and thus prevent the delay, which none relished, and the necessity, which was, from appearances, by no means inviting, of resorting to force. The report was made, and Tarleton peremptorily demanded the keys. The lady replied that she would never surrender them willingly, and gave the chieftain to understand that if he obtained the keys, which she displayed from her girdle, he must get them as he could.

Tarleton disdained to use compulsory or ungallant means with a lady of such undoubted pretensions, and ordered the sergeant to take men and what materials he could gather, and break open the door which locked in the precious viands, most precious of all things to the soldier.

He himself superintended the work, and from motives of seeking her safety in his presence, as well as

a natural anxiety, Mrs. Moore, attended by her children, went along with him. This work consumed an hour or two, which rendered the British officer restive and impatient, especially when he reflected that the delay might be saved by a slight severity, which he had not often scrupled to practice. His men were astonished at this relaxation, and an officer was heard swear, "that he believed the colonel was smitten with the comely appearance and lofty spirit of the rebel dame."

At length, after vigorous efforts, the door gave way, and the barrels lay before them. Tarleton gave orders to have his men served each with a heavy ration, and their canteens filled. This done, he unhesitatingly caused his men to break open the heads of such as remained over, and the floor of the cellar was flooded in an instant. Mrs. Moore looked on silently, but with ill-repressed indignation, which Tarleton failed not to notice.

"The rules of war are severe, my good madam," said he, "but you rebels leave us no choice. This liquor has been saved with great labor, and doubtless for other purposes, but my orders are to anticipate and provide against such purposes."

"I expected no better," replied the lady, "and perhaps I had best prepare for worse."

"That you will soon find out, madam," was the pithy reply, and the stern veteran bowed and re-conducted his fair companion to the upper story. The sergeant now presented his memorandum, and after some conversation between the two, Tarleton turning to the lady, observed, "my officer returns me herewith a schedule of your stock of provisions, which I am ordered either to seize, or cut off from the rebel army. I have levied enough already to answer present purposes, but you must give me your word of honor not to apply these to the wants of the Americans, else I shall proceed with my duty."

"Then proceed," said the lady, firmly, "for I assure you that I shall make no such promise."

"Madam, this promise can cost you nothing," said the officer, evidently reluctant to resort to severity. "If I destroy them, the rebels cannot get them, and they lose nothing."

"I am not insensible to what you say," returned the lady, "and I acknowledge my obligation to you for one instance of courtesy. If you cannot spare us further losses and destruction, I regret it, but I cannot purchase your forbearance by the sacrifice of my duty to my husband and countrymen."

This heroic speech closed the parley, and threw, at once, all to the discretion and decision of the British chieftain. He cast around his officers an inquiring and somewhat perplexed glance. Their expression could not be mistaken, and he resolved to err for once on the side of forbearance.

"Sergeant, form the line, and prepare for marching," he sharply exclaimed. "And now hearken, madam; I shall leave your property untouched, after having exacted our meal, and let loose the brandy barrels, and you may boast hereafter of having done what no man has succeeded in doing, and that is, having turned Lieutenant Colonel Tarleton, of his majesty's dragoons, from the proper course of his purpose."

Having thus said, he strode forth from the room and called for his charger. Gratified at her success in preserving the brandy disguised in the front cellar, and touched with the unexpected courtesy from an officer so usually unrelenting, one other idea still occurred to the sagacious reflections of this calculating woman. This was that stragglers might return, and in the absence of officers, destroy what was left, and subject her to renewed outrage. She took her resolution in a moment, and just when Tarleton was in the act of stepping forth to mount his horse, she gently tapped his elbow, and requested that an officer might be permitted to remain until the troop had gone far enough to prevent the occurrence she apprehended.

"Madam," said he, "I do not feel authorized to detail any officer on a duty which might prove one of great danger, and not known to the service. I shall take pains to guard against what you apprehend; but if any one chooses to volunteer in your favor, I shall not prohibit him from so doing." A young lieutenant immediately rode out and tendered his services.

"Very well," said Tarleton again. And gracefully waving his sword in adieu, he turned and gallopped to his usual post at the head of the troop. The bugle sounded, the word "march" was passed along the line, and wheeling into sections with most elegant precision, the imposing array moved off. In a very few moments more the last of the "invincible legion" disappeared in the distance, and the solitary dragoon officer sat down in the parlor of the Ordinary to meditate on the probable dangers of his situation.

But these dangers were only imaginary, for his grateful hostess heard in a few weeks after he left her, that he had reached Tarleton in safety, and participated in the obstinate and bloody fight at Guilford Court House, which resulted so gloriously to the American army, and so effectually broke up the boasted and well planned campaign of the British general.

JESSICA;

OR, A STRAY LEAF FROM THE HEART.

BY JANE T. HARDIN.

It was a sheltered, little nook: a valley closed in by hills, until it was formed into a kind of emerald basin, with the waters of a small stream flashing and purling its way through its midst: this was the valley in summer; but now, alas! that it ever should be so, it was winter! And the very features that made this spot so beautiful amid sunshine and green foliage and bursting buds, but added to its desolateness at this season. The bare limbs of the trees creaked mournfully in the blast, as though bewailing their departed glory; the grass was all gone; the little stream had grown sullen, and wended its way moodily through the wet bottom. A small, white cottage was the only thing that gave relief to the scene; it was surrounded by a rail-fence—what is called a "worm fence" in the West: a garden spot was on one side, and on the other an orchard of some extent.

At the close of one of the dreariest days in the last of winter, a traveller was seen making his way as best he might toward this cottage; his horse plunged through the mud wearily, the fitful gusts of wind brought a chilling shower of rain into his face every few moments, and as the traveller stopped at the stile, and after fastening his horse to the fence approached the house, he seemed to move with difficulty, as though benumbed by cold, or suffering from some other cause.

His knock at the door was answered by a voice bidding him "come in," and at the same time the latch was raised; and there was discovered sitting by a cheerful fire an old lady very plainly but neatly dressed; and, with one hand still resting upon the latch of the door, stood a young girl—you could scarcely say whether she were yet a child or a woman—for although her figure would indicate that she might, perhaps, be sixteen years of age—which in fact she was—yet the child-like expression of her wondering face as she raised it to that of the stranger, would induce the belief that she was not so old by several years. This is the impression that would have been made upon an indifferent spectator; to the applicant at the threshold nothing was distinctly seen but the warm fire, nothing asked but shelter for the night. The old lady arose, laid down her knitting, and welcomed him beneath her humble roof.

As he advanced into the room and laid aside his hat and riding-coat, it would have been difficult to recognize in the haggard features, half shrouded by the drenched hair, the elegant Lorenzo Carlyle, whose noble form had passed through the crowded rooms of fashion, "the observed of all observers" there: the glance of whose bright eye, or the bend of whose head had caused the heart of the young belle to flutter with joy. He was now just twenty-five, in the pride of manhood, but as he took his seat, and the full light fell upon his face, he looked some years older. He had only been sitting by the fire a few moments, when his head rested heavily against the post of the bed near which he had been placed, and the old lady arising in some trepidation, discovered he had swooned; probably occasioned by the sudden transition from cold to heat. A servant woman was called from an outer room or kitchen, he was laid upon the bed, and the usual remedies resorted to for his recovery: at length he slowly awoke but only to find himself in a violent chill; he, however, arose and retired to the next room, a bed was prepared, he threw himself on it, but not to sleep; for, in spite of the old lady's camomile tea, the chill continued a long time, and was succeeded by an alarming fever. In the morning his fever had increased, affecting his brain, until he was quite delirious, and he incessantly muttered to himself, "that dark, dark cloud!"

"Poor gentleman!" the old lady exclaimed, "he thinks he is still travelling through the rain."

A physician was sent for, but for many days his skill seemed of little avail; the fever increased with frightful rapidity; he was insensible to all around him, and all this time the young girl Jessica sat by his bed, moistening his lips with water, changing his pillows, soothing him with her soft voice, that "most excellent thing in woman;" and though a servant man who completed this household, lifted him as he wished to be moved, the weary hours of watching were all kept by the maiden; and as she gazed upon him while he slept, no wonder that features which had been dangerous for an experienced woman of the world to look upon, were traced upon her heart; so very faint at the beginning, that they resembled the half defined shadows of a painter's first imaginings, and gradually they grew more distinct, until at length they had all the perfectness of the finished picture thrown out upon the canvass.

And yet she knew it not; she did not pause to analyze her own feelings; she joined her innocent hands and prayed to God for his recovery, without thinking a moment beyond that happy period; for it is only by the bitter lessons of experience we learn, that whenever the heart begins to flutter with joy, the iron bars are just before it, against which it is destined to be bruised and broken.

One day, as Jessica sat by the bed-side of Carlyle, after a long and composed slumber he opened his eyes, and, for the first time, seemed rational. "My little lady," he said, "I have been sick a long time, have I not?"

"Yes, sir, very long."

"And have you been my nurse all this time?"

"Oh! sir," she replied, "it has given me great pleasure to nurse you; but you must not talk, you are too weak."

"Well!" he answered, "I will not; you are very good; but tell me what is your name, and where am I?"

"This place is called 'Green Vale,' and my name is Jessica, though they call me Jessie."

"Ah, yes," he replied, with a sigh, "I remember it all now: I was taken ill the night I arrived here: Jessica is a very pretty name; and the old lady who lives here is your grandmother?"

"No, sir, I have no relation, but when my father and mother died she took me, and has been very kind to me; so I always call her grandma." As she spoke her large, dark eyes filled with tears, and for the first time he noticed the exceeding loveliness of her face.

From this time he recovered, but slowly, for his constitution had undergone a terrible shock, and the bright sunny days of spring had come, and the pale blue flowers had began to peep up, and the birds to trill forth their melody before he had gained strength enough to walk.

In this time he had learned from the old lady of the house the history of his young nurse. One day while he was alone with Mrs. Stephens, he said to her, "Jessie tells me she is not your grand-daughter. Is she a relation's child?"

"Ah, no, sir," replied the old woman, "though I love her as a daughter; but, poor child, it is hard to tell who she is. Her father and mother moved to this neighborhood when the child was young, and as pretty a couple they were, sir, as you would wish to look upon. But they were poor, weakly creatures, both of them, and though they scuffled mighty hard, they didn't seem to know how to get along. She was so fair and delicate—like it would have made you sorry to see her trying to work; and then she had a cough, poor thing! and got to be punier and punier every day; her husband tried all he could to save her from doing drudgery about the house, and I used to go over and milk the cow for her myself, and sent my servant woman over to wash for her, but it was all of no use. She wasn't made for earth, no how, to my way of thinking; at last she took to her bed, and her husband sent for the doctor, and I went over and 'tended her myself till she died. Ah, me, but that was a sad day, sir; her husband looked like somebody distracted, and poor little Jessie screamed and clung to her mother, and we couldn't get her away 'till she had cried herself to sleep. From that day the husband never looked up, but seemed to pine away like, and its my opinion if ever a mortal died of a broken-heart, it was him. When he was dying, he gave Jessie to me, and said, 'Mrs. Stephens, you were kind to my poor wife; will you not take my child and raise it, I have nothing to reward you for it, but Heaven will.' I could only cry, sir, like a baby, and press his hand to let him know I would; so, when he was dead and gone, I brought the child home with me, and I have tried to bring her up in the fear of the Lord. She is a mighty good girl, sir, and Heaven has, as he said, rewarded me, for I lost my husband when I was a young woman, and my children have all been taken away before me; but the Lord has spared her to be a comfort to my old age. Her father called himself Loraine, and I've a notion they were great folks in Virginny, where they came from, for though they were not a bit proud, they had sort of a grand way about 'em that aint common, and then though they had precious little plunder, they had besides their Bible these here fine little books, which they would be reading in of a night. I have learned Jessie all the learning I know myself, which, to be sure, is not much, but she can read her Bible as pretty as any girl round about us, and she has read pretty nigh all that is in these books; she is powerful fond of reading, sir, and I wish I could have given her a better chance."

The books to which the old lady alluded were a few volumes of history, a copy of Shakspeare, several of Scott's novels, a volume of Dr. Chalmers' sermons, and the "Pilgrim's Progress." From this time Carlyle took an unwonted interest in the young Jessica: so helpless, so innocent and child-like was she, it was a sweet task to turn over the pages of her heart, to con the truths that had there been written by the finger of God: for although she had little of the world's wisdom, she had learned that wisdom from on high, which is "pure and peaceable." She had lived almost alone in the world, and had been saved from coarse associations by the care of the kind and good, if ignorant woman, who had brought her up.

Day after day she sat by Carlyle, reading to him the few books her father had left her, listening with eager wonder to his explanations of difficult passages, and sometimes when he would tell her what appeared to her untutored mind to be marvelous beyond credibility, her gay, ringing laugh would awaken the echoes of that happy valley: and as her teacher saw the brightening intelligence of her face; as he felt that he was opening to her a new world of beauty and enchantment; as he saw her gaze upon the starry Heavens of literature with the ecstasy that a Caspar Hauser looked, for the first time, upon the blue vault above him, he was filled with the purest joy in contemplating the ever increasing graces of his lovely pupil: yet he looked upon her calmly; he regarded her merely as a child; a child of great promise; a bud that might expand into a magnificent flower with proper culture; but he sighed to think this culture must be denied her: he sometimes almost felt as though he were doing wrong to awaken those aspirations in the mind which never after can be stilled; that thirst for knowledge which ever cries, "give! give!" Little did he dream that he was kindling a still more dangerous fire, that she was learning lessons more mysterious than those he taught, that as she read to him the glowing pages of Ivanhoe, and listened to his comments, "the book and teacher both were love's purveyors." Little did she know this herself: she only felt that she was happy, and this was enough to her young heart. She watched the changes of his face until she learned to read its emotions with a woman's accuracy, and she was troubled to see that often an expression of pain and melancholy overspread his countenance.

One bright evening, when the air was redolent with

spring's first flowers, and all things spoke of hope, they walked down to the rivulet, and as they looked into its clear, shining waters, Jessie felt it was an emblem of the current of her own life; so quiet—so full of low music: she was aroused from this reverie by the voice of her companion, who said, "Jessie, I have grown strong now, thanks to your care, and to-morrow I must leave you."

"Leave us! Why?" she exclaimed, and her face turned very pale; the thought of separation seemed never to have crossed her mind any more than if she had been in Heaven: poor thing! she had not lived long in the world.

"Oh!" he replied, "there are many reasons why I should leave: you know I could not remain here always; my business demands my presence, and—— my wife perhaps expects me."

At the mention of "his wife," had a thunderbolt fallen at her feet she could not have been more astounded: yet she only turned a slight shade the paler, and betrayed by no word or sign her agony—like the Spartan boy she hugged to her heart the secret that was gnawing it out. After a few moments she observed in a tone of apparent indifference, "I am sorry you leave, but if your wife expects you, you ought to go; have you been long married?"

"Yes," he answered, while a low sigh escaped him, "several years; I was married young."

"And your wife—describe her to me!"

"She is very beautiful—but let me break you this cluster of plum-blossoms," and returning to the house, they talked only of the blossoms.

That night Jessie retired to the little room or rather closet that was set aside for her use, and long and fervent was the prayer she put up, interrupted by bursting sobs and gushing tears, while she knelt by the side of her bed, and buried her face in its snowy covering: she arose serene, having, as had ever been her wont, committed herself and her fate to Him who can never err: and though she was sometimes tempted to say—"why have I been made so to suffer?" she hushed it by repeating, "His thoughts are not as my thoughts, nor His ways as my ways; but as the Heavens are higher than the earth, so are His thoughts and His ways higher than mine."

The next morning their guest departed, and she said nothing to stay him, bidding him farewell calmly, and expressing such wishes for his happiness as she might have used for any other who had passed weeks under the same roof.

He knew, although they were poor and humble, they would disdain to receive a recompense for the trouble he had given them, but he presented the old lady a very handsome pocket Bible he had with him, and as he was leaving he placed upon Jessie's finger a ring containing a single diamond of the first water, but of whose value she was ignorant, saying, "Jessie, you will wear this, will you not, to remind you of the many pleasant days I have spent with you? Be a good girl, and may you be happy!" he added, as he kindly laid his hand upon her smooth brown hair.

And thus farewell was spoken, and as the young girl looked after him while he wended his way down through the valley and was lost in the distance, a feeling of desolation fell upon her heart that she had never known before; that dream which had come over her as soft and beautiful as the light of a lunar rainbow faded away, and nothing was left but the dull grey of night: yet she was not one to yield to useless regrets; to indulge in feelings which would lead to unhappiness, if not to sin. Her's was the principle so happily expressed by our gifted poet, to

> "Act, act in the living present,
> Heart within and God o'erhead."

So with a half suppressed sigh she turned into the house, and after taking the ring off and laying it away in a little casket—for she felt it would be dangerous to wear it then—she went about her daily duties, and she was "resigned if not consoled;" for in the stern path of rectitude is gathered those flowers whose bloom is unfading, whose hues are immortal, which breathe to us the divine aroma of Heaven.

Three months from this time and that cottage was the scene of sadder suffering. Mrs. Stephens, who had enjoyed almost uninterrupted health during her whole life, had at length been stricken by disease: the time had come when she was to be "gathered to her fathers," and she was with Christian resignation yielding up her soul to the "Father of spirits." Her two old servants stood looking on the scene of death, while the tears rolled down their sable cheeks. Jessica knelt by the bed-side, her hand clasped within that of the dying woman, her whole frame quivering with emotion, and with each convulsive sob it seemed as though the heart of the maiden would break.

"My child!" the old lady articulated, "do not cry so sorely. God will take care of you. You have been a good child. Meet me up—up—up—I—come!" she murmured, and then more distinctly repeated, "I am the resurrection, and—and—the life," and then she breathed that long, deep sigh, the sound of which has fallen sadly upon many an ear; that sigh which extinguished the last faint spark in the anxious breast of the listener; that sigh which is the farewell of the wearied heart to the sorrows of earth.

Most happy is it that when the afflictions of life bear down too heavily upon us we find refuge in insensibility: as Jessie sank to the earth unconscious of her sad loss and most forlorn condition, a stranger who had entered the room unperceived, stepped forward and received her in his arms. He was a gentleman who had reached the meridian of life. In travelling through the country he was overtaken by night. Seeing a light he had stopped to inquire his way farther, when he was made a witness to this scene of woe. Taking her up in his arms, he laid her upon the bed in the adjoining room, and after chafing her hands for some moments he perceived the signs of returning sensibility, and left her in the care of some neighboring women who had just arrived. Unwilling to leave one apparently so helpless, he re-entered the room where the corpse lay, and taking a family Bible from a shelf, he passed into the little room usually occupied by Jessie, where a light had been left burning. He sat down, and reflecting upon the sad scene he had just witnessed, began to turn over the leaves of the Bible to find a portion suited

to the present solemn occasion; but as he turned he came to the family register, "Frederic and Mary Loraine!" he repeated aloud, "that can be no other than my poor brother and his wife: but how came the Bible here, and who are these people?" He was too anxious to sleep, so going out in front of the cottage, he walked to and fro until day.

By the next evening the neighbors had gathered in, and all was disposed for the last solemn rites to be paid to the dead. The grave was dug in a quiet spot where the leaves rustled in the wind, and the sunbeams shone curiously through the overarching branches upon the green grass.

Still the stranger lingered; and after all was over and Jessica had seen the cold mould piled upon the only heart in the wide world that loved her, and had returned to her lone home feeling very miserable, he tapped at the door and was bid in a low voice, "come in."

When she saw him she started with surprise, for she had noticed no one since the death of her benefactress, and he was a stranger: advancing to her, he said, "I hope, young lady, you will pardon my intrusion at a time when you have so much cause for grief, but I too have my anxieties, and I am sure you will not hesitate to lesson them by informing me to whom that large family Bible belongs, and how it came here."

"That Bible," she replied, "was my father's, and when he and my poor mother died it became mine."

The old gentleman caught her in his arms, and as he kissed her again and again the warm tears fell upon her face, and she felt that she was not alone in the world. "God had tempered the wind to the shorn lamb."

"And you are the child of my poor brother, and he is, as I feared, dead? poor, poor fellow!" After weeping some time in silence, he said, "and were you his only child?"

"Yes, sir, he had no other."

"Poor fellow! how rash he was! I was his brother, some years older than myself: he was the joy and the pride of our family. I had married, and having lost my wife, took my little son and went to France. While I was absent your father married a lovely woman—I knew her well—but one who belonged to an humble family. My father, who was descended from a noble family in England, and had all the aristocracy of feeling so common to the old Virginians, could not brook this stroke to his pride. He refused to be reconciled to my brother, or give him any assistance. Your parents were poor, and after struggling in Virginia until after your birth, they determined to move to the West. Upon my return I made every inquiry for them, but was never able to trace them until Heaven directed me to you last night. Our parents relented before they died, and left him a large estate, which, my child, is all yours; and you shall never suffer, but shall be unto me a daughter if you will."

"Oh! most gladly, most gratefully," she replied. "Whither thou goest I will go," tears choked her utterance.

Her uncle tenderly embraced her. Preparations were soon made for their journey. Mrs. Stephens having no relatives, the cottage with all the furniture was given to the two old faithful servants, and packing up her slight wardrobe, the books of her father, and the little box containing her ring, she was ready for departure. She took a long and tearful adieu of the grave of her more than mother, and then seated by the side of her uncle in his carriage, she was soon on her way to Virginia.

We have before mentioned that Mr. Loraine had a son, a young man some four or five years older than Jessica, and we will pardon the old gentleman, if on his trip homeward he was so won by the gentleness and good sense of his niece, that he began to think it would be a very happy arrangement to make her his daughter; never supposing for an instant that any objection could be interposed by the parties principally concerned. When they arrived at the homestead in the "Old Dominion," George Loraine was the first to welcome them. He had been riding over the plantation, and seeing the carriage he had galloped on to the house, and by the time the driver had stopped the horses he had dismounted, and was waiting for them cap in hand, his manly face glowing with exercise; his blue eye glowing with pleasure; his chesnut curls just so much disarranged as to heighten the effect of his remarkable personal beauty.

No wonder the heart of the father throbbed with pride as well as pleasure; no wonder there was a tone of gratification in the words, "bless thee, my boy!" as he pressed him to his bosom. When George was presented to his cousin, he met her timid glance with a look of admiring, though respectful wonder, and when his father added, "the daughter of your poor uncle Frederic," he kindly kissed her on the cheek.

Every day increased the affection of Mr. Loraine for his niece; he employed the best masters that her want of early education might be remedied; and surely never did pupil more fully repay the kindness of her benefactor, or the care of her teachers: she had that burning desire for knowledge that has been attributed to the Lady Jane Grey, and however difficult or devious the path by which it was pursued, her eagerness never abated.

Thus passed away three years. She had persuaded herself that she had long since ceased to remember Lorenzo Carlyle with feelings at all dangerous to her peace, and thought she might venture now to wear the ring he gave her, regarding it only as the gift of one who had been kind to her in childhood. She accordingly wore it, thinking of him very calmly, or *as she thought* not at all. But in her mind there was an ideal formed composed of all perfections, that made her singularly indifferent to the young men around her, and gave to her manners a self-possession and dignity seldom seen in one so young; this ideal acted as a strange incentive in the acquisition of knowledge, and always arose before her when she had mastered a difficult piece of music, or had made a more than usually finished sketch.

But one thing troubled her, and that was her uncle's favorite scheme of uniting her to his son, which was made so visible in all his actions she was often pained

by it, until her cousin George, who was as careless and merry hearted as he was handsome, relieved her by saying:

"It seems, cousin Jessie, that my father is determined to make us happy in spite of ourselves by joining us 'in holy wedlock,' but do not look so persecuted about it, dear coz; I am not a knight errant nor hero of romance, to run off with you and marry you before you know it. You absolutely look sometimes as though you were apprehensive the ceremony had already commenced."

"No, cousin," she replied, laughing, "I really apprehend nothing of the sort, for though very kind you are not very lover-like, but my dear uncle's manner sometimes embarrasses me."

"Ah, well! never mind that, I shall manage it all very easily."

And from that time it was made a jest between her and her cousin, and all uneasiness was at an end. One day the young people were somewhat startled by the old gentleman announcing his determination to take them to Europe, but the proposal was too agreeable to be rejected, and forthwith every preparation was made, and soon they had bid "good night" to their "native land."

As we are not writing a description of "foreign countries," and care not to touch upon topics that have been lighted up by the electric genius of a Headly, or rendered attractive by the playful humor of a Stephens or the spiritual moralizing of a Cheever, we will make a jump of two whole years, and bring our travellers down in the middle of a muddy road with panting horses and a broken carriage, near a small village in the midst of the Alps: fortunately they were not far from the comfortable little inn the village boasted, and as none of them were seriously hurt, they were soon stationed in snug quarters, with the most obsequious of landlords, and most obliging of landladies. Unfortunately or fortunately, for things are just as we take them, their carriage had been very much damaged, and as they could not there procure another, it would be some days before they could proceed.

The evening that they arrived George knocked at his cousin's door, and when bid to enter walked in, saying—"well, coz, as you ladies cannot possibly exist without lovers and cologne, and as I know you have the last, for I supplied you myself, I went to our landlord to inquire what were your chances at this dismal little place for the first—so he told me he had a gentleman staying with him 'very grand and very magnificent,' and *everything* you could imagine, who had been here for some days searching among the mountains for flowers or rocks, or some other equally wise purpose, I do not remember precisely what. However, while we were talking in came this very grand and magnificent gentleman, and who should it prove to be but an old friend of mine, one with whom I went to college, though he was several years my senior. He left college and married the most beautiful termagant in the city of N———. He tells me she died some three years since, and really I felt like congratulating him, for it is no joke to live with such a woman seven years, as he did. And now if you feel disposed to make him amends for his former wretched life, just put on your most becoming dress and most bewitching smile, and then bend on him those dark lustrous eyes that broke so many hearts in Naples, and the matter is concluded. By the way he sups with us to-night."

"You are exceedingly kind and thoughtful, my cousin, but in caring for me I fear you forget yourself. Have you not inquired of the landlord whether there is not some 'grand and magnificent' lady about the house to whom you could make your devoirs?"

"Ah, no! I am not so fastidious as you; I shall go back to Virginia and marry Clara Payton, who has more beauty than all the dark-eyed girls of Italy."

Jessica took up a book, commenced reading, and thought no more of the conversation until supper. When she entered the room a stranger arose, and was introduced to her as Mr. Carlyle; for an instant the blood rushed to her face and neck until it was all a glow of crimson, and then receded to her heart, leaving her like some pale and beautiful statue. Carlyle did not recognize in the graceful and elegant woman who stood before him—for she had more than fulfilled the promise of her childhood—the simple girl he had taught in the "Green Vale" of Kentucky.

But in a moment she recovered her self-possession, and advancing to him with calmness, remarked "that she had known Mr. Carlyle before," and then, for the first time, when that voice so "like a mournful lute" fell on his ear, he knew her; and as he pressed her hand, and expressed his joy at meeting her again, he noticed upon her finger the ring he had given her: but the next day it was gone.

Their detention was prolonged from time to time, yet none of the party found it wearisome. They wandered among the Alps; together they gazed upon this glorious scenery, and their evenings were spent in cheerful conversations and reading. And Carlyle's heart was bathed in the liquid light that beamed from the dark eyes of Jessica; his ear drank in the tones of her voice till its music filled his soul with streams of perpetual melody.

One morning they started to take a ramble among the mountains. Mr. Loraine refused to go on account of the fatigue: George started with them, but before they had gone far recollected that he had forgotten to give some orders about his gun, and turned back. Carlyle and Jessica were thus left to pursue their walk alone: for some distance they walked on in silence, when he remarked, "I little hoped when I first stopped at this obscure village, that here I was to pass the very happiest days I had ever known; but whatever may befall me in after life, the remembrance of this time will come up through all sorrow and darkness to cheer me. Would that I dared believe it had been as pleasant to you!"

"Oh, surely," she replied, in a light tone, "the time has passed very pleasantly, thanks to you and cousin George!"

"Nay, lady," he rejoined, "you mistake my meaning, or choose to do so," then stopping and looking steadily at her, he continued in an earnest tone, "Jessica, let me call you so, I love you! I love you more than I can tell you; more perhaps," he added, sadly,

"than your own heart answers to. But, lady, I must hear my destiny from your own lips; if you cannot return my affection I shall bear my fate as best I may. If you can—if you can love me, oh, Jessica! speak but one word Give me but one look of assent!"

But Jessica spake no word; she lifted not her drooping lids, though her whole frame trembled with visible emotion. All the light of hope faded from the face of Carlyle, and they walked on in silence; she feeling that she had wounded the heart that loved her, and yet too timid even to make the attempt to soften the pain. At length they came to one of those immense fields of ice that are found among the Alps: bordering this glacier across from where they stood, some delicate flowers had sprung up through ice and snow to meet the glad sunshine. Jessica, to relieve the awkward embarrassment of their silence, remarked how beautiful they were. He replied,

"If you wish them, Miss Loraine, I will get them for you," and immediately stepped on the ice.

"Oh, no, no!" she answered, "do not risk yourself," and in her eagerness sprang after him to hold him back: the ice gave way beneath them, they were precipitated down—down into the dark chasm below, and when they touched the bottom it was to find themselves in one of those immense caverns that add terror to those wild mountains. Jessica had been shielded by the arm that Carlyle threw around her in falling; but he was bruised and hurt. Death stared them in the face, for what hope could there be of escape from that living tomb?

"This is dreadful! horrible!" he exclaimed, as they reached the bottom.

"Miss Loraine, are you hurt?"

"No," she replied; "but you?"

"Oh, I care not for myself, but I must make some effort to extricate you from this awful place: this place of death."

"Lorenzo!" she answered, in a low, timid voice, "it will not be terrible to die with you. Oh, it would be much more dreadful to live in the bright world above without you, than to be buried with you here in darkness and in death." And the maiden's head sank upon his bosom, while tears of tenderness gushed forth.

His arm encircled her waist; he pressed her to his heart, and here in the sight of eternity their love was plighted: here, in the midst of terror and darkness, light was in their dwelling. For hours they groped their way, hopeless almost of ever again seeing the light of day; but their dreary path was cheered by the words of affection. When "hope had almost folded her wings and saddened to despair," they heard the sound of gurling waters: it was a small stream, they followed its course; where it ran from under the glacier into the open air, stray beams of light were struggling through; the ice was thin and partially melted, so that a place of egress was effected, and by the side of this stream, as it murmured through the vale, the lovers knelt and returned thanks for their deliverance.

A few months brought our whole party back to their homes, and as Jessica stood at the altar by the side of him whom alone she had ever loved, she did not regret the vows given in the cavern of the Alps.

JEALOUSY'S VICTIM.

BY ANGELINE E. ALEXANDER.

CHAPTER I.

What is this life without the light of love?

At the tender age of two years, Florence Elwyn was bequeathed by a dying mother to a father's love. As is generally the case, the affections of the husband and father centered in the little being who remained as the last tie which bound him to earth, guarding her like some cherished flower which neither the air nor sunshine might too rudely visit. At seventeen the light-hearted child had grown into a being of rare loveliness, while to her striking beauty was added the charm of a sweet disposition and filial devotedness. But, alas! a strange world is this—in which heart-breaking grief stalks abroad, eager for his prey, and marks as his victims the sweetest of earth's flowers. Is there no remedy? Alas. none! Youth, beauty, innocence, possess no charm of occult power with which to ward off the fatal spells. Just as Florence Elwyn was budding into womanhood her father was suddenly attacked with a malignant fever, which in a few days terminated his existence, and she was a lone orphan. When Florence partially recovered from this severe shock, it was to feel most keenly the desolation of her situation. She knew of no relatives. She was young and unprotected, alone in the wide world, and as she threw herself beside her father's grave and wept in passionate despair, how fervently did she pray that the damp earth would unclose and receive her to his cold embrace. An early and long tried friend of Mr. Elwyn attended to the settlement of the estate, and in the most pressing and affectionate manner solicited Florence to make his house her future home. Mr. Ellison had for years been on terms of the closest friendship with her beloved parent, and his only child Anne Ellison, the playmate of her childhood, was her own most intimate friend. Her father's property, although not so ample as was supposed, was fully sufficient to support her handsomely and relieve all fear of dependence, so the sorrowful girl accepted with gratitude the kind offer, and became a member of his family, while the sympathies and kind attentions of his wife and daughter tended to lessen somewhat the excess of her grief. She dwelt in great retirement in the bosom of the Ellison family, and years elapsed ere they could prevail on her to accompany them in their occasional visits through the neighborhood. But although Florence Elwyn had secluded herself from society, yet she had been seen and admired.

Frederick Ashton was the last member of a family noted for its wealth and respectability. Having no particular tie upon his affections, and ample means to gratify his wishes, he had spent several years in travelling through Europe as well as his own country. During a tour through the Southwestern states fortuitous circumstances detained him sometime at B——, the dwelling place of Florence Elwyn, and charmed by the picturesque views in the vicinity he still lingered, long after the necessity for delay ceased to exist. His person was commanding, and the fire of his soul shone in the depths of his dark eyes, emitting sparks of intellect; but a close observer might have detected a shade of disappointment, or a little suspicion of mankind in his handsome features. His mind was of the kind to grapple with the world. The brilliancy of his genius, and the soundness of his principles well calculated him to rule over mind in general, while to his gifted understanding was added a taste rich by nature, and highly cultivated by study and travel. Such was the man in whose bosom Florence Elwyn had awakened an interest hitherto unknown. At first the story of her early sorrows touched his heart, then followed the desire to gain her acquaintance. Frequent intercourse deepened his impressions, and love came upon him ere he was aware. What were the feelings of the object of his love? Florence Elwyn was the tenderly cherished idol of a father's love upon which she leaned, and when death with ruthless hand tore away her prop, the sense of loneliness that filled her sad heart was almost insupportable. She had a soul too full of poetry, drinking it in from every lovely thing around her. The shadowy glen, the rippling streamlet, and the dark forest were to her beauty and incense. Imaginative and susceptible, she had always lived in a world of her own creation, and in her heart there was an undefinable yearning for some one to guide its impulses, share its communings, and cling to for support. Such an one she found in Frederick Ashton. The correctness of his judgment would direct her, in the deep tenderness of his heart she would find kindred sympathy, and the strength and decision of his character would prove a sure defence against life's storms. To her mind he presented an embodiment of the noblest and loftiest principles which adorn and sublimate human nature. Her love was like

> A dream of poetry that may not be
> Written or told—exceedingly beautiful.

Under the influence of this sweet vision the joy blossoms of her innocent heart, that had once withered away at the touch of sorrow, now revived and became redolent with a thousand perfumes. In the quiet of the summer twilight they would stray forth to gaze upon the beautiful scenery and listen to the low whispering anthem of the forest trees. Then would Frederick Ashton recall the classic enthusiasm of his early days, until Florence, fascinated into a

forgetfulness of herself, became a partaker in a conversation to which at first she was only a timid listener. She loved poetry, and he was an admirable reciter. He had imbibed the poetry of nature from the rushing mountain streams and beautiful lakes of the North, and loved to repeat his verse to an ear so rapt as hers. She was a daughter of the sunny South, where the gush of warm affections flow out pure from the heart, unrestrained by the chilling breath of a colder climate, and as she listened to those thrilling strains a rapture would steal over her, stirring her heart with vague and mysterious feelings. How she loved to watch the pale moon leading on the starry host of Heaven, until the fairy-like landscape dreamily melted away, and the soft summer air floated by like angels' whispers, while with a soul beating in unison with this harmony, and a crowd of holy feelings round her heart, she would stroll silently along forgetting earth in thoughts too ecstatic to be clothed in words. Thus she loved. Frederick Ashton had mingled a great deal with society, and had met with hartlessness as well among woman-kind as the other sex, which had created a great disgust of them, and an utter dread and abhorrence of coquetry. He imagined his wealth and station in society to be the desideratum at which the fair ones aimed to carry out successfully their schemes of flirtation. If a pretty woman smiled on him or received him graciously, he was sure it was the concealment of a plan to jilt him. So strong was his prejudice upon this point, that it amounted almost to monomania, and so completely had he encased himself in this coat of mail, as to render his heart impervious to the arrows that were constantly flashing from the brilliant eyes, or quivering on the dimpled cheeks of the fair beings with whom he associated. But a change had come over him. His hitherto watchful heart had been betrayed into loving the sweet and gentle Florence before he was aware of danger. He admired the blended fervor, delicacy, and ethereality of her mind, and he loved her for her gentle dependence and trusting confidence. He thought her as near perfection as it was possible for human nature to approach; and yet he persuaded his better judgment that it was necessary to study her nature and character more thoroughly ere he confessed his love. How little does man know of the depth and tenderness of woman's affection! He may think that she is influenced by sinister motives; that his fortune or worldly fame perhaps attracted her. Deluded mortal! does he imagine that the love of a true woman can be bought with such gilded trifles as these? He bestows upon her numberless pleasing attentions, that are so gratifying to a woman when coming from the man she loves. He yields a constant deference to her wishes, that is as delicate as it is flattering, and is so fully appreciated by a refined mind. All this he thinks he may do with impunity, while, as he calls it, he is studying her character. If he should happen to find some discord with the perfect harmony of his ideas, or perchance a rival present herself, in one fairer, richer, or more accomplished, his pursuit is at an end, and those delicate attentions are transferred to another. Judging from his own heart he supposes that should the forsaken one feel a little at first, time, change of scene, or perhaps a new lover, will soon heal the wound and leave no sear. Thus do men, who are far from intending wrong, often reason with themselves. They know not that every look, every tone of the beloved one is engraven upon woman's heart, guarded as a sacred treasure, and yielded up only at the behest of death.

CHAPTER II.

> She wove a tale with all a demon's art
> Should bear to mock the secret of her heart;
> She formed a plot that o'er her fair young brow
> Should call of pain and shame the crimson glow.

"It shall never be," exclaimed a haughty girl, as she pushed aside the embroidery frame over which she was bending, and rising up, commenced walking the floor with a quick, irregular step, then suddenly pausing before the person whom she addressed, her eyes sparkling with ungovernable rage—"it shall never be. I repeat it—Frederick Ashton shall never marry Florence Elwyn."

"And pray, how will you prevent it, Kate?" asked the young man, who bore so striking a resemblance to the first speaker, that it were an easy matter to decide the relationship that existed between them. "Everything seems to be going on very prosperously—indeed I should not be astonished if they are already engaged—and an angel he'll get for a wife."

"Fool!" muttered the angry woman, contemptuously, "are you too caught by that baby face, whining voice and affected manners?"

"Pretty language for a sister to address to a brother," replied the young man, while a cold smile of disdain played around his mouth. "Ah, Kate, you had better take Florence Elwyn for a pattern if you ever expect to get such a man as Frederick Ashton, or indeed any other."

"The artful creature! well does she know how to play her part. She feigns a sweet pensive look, and enlists sympathy in behalf of her early sorrows; but it is not the loss of a dead father she mourns, these are only the arts she employs to secure the living lover."

"Shame on you, Kate!" exclaimed her brother, indignantly, "to judge of any woman by such a cold heartless piece of artificiality as yourself."

"Have I not seen it all?" she replied, in a voice that passion rendered tremulous. "Frederick Ashton would have been mine had he not fell into the snare of that designing creature. But it is not too late—I'll have him yet."

"A very maidenly assertion, upon my word," said her brother, ironically. "But," resumed he, in a more natural tone, "that were easier said than done."

"I shall need your assistance," continued his sister, "to that will be added my own discriminating judgment and unfailing resources of invention, and I have no fear for the end."

Her brother regarded her with a look of withering scorn, "say your artful maliciousness, and you'll come nearer the truth. However," he added, gaily, "I am ready to enter into any measures that will be

likely to make me the proud and happy husband of Florence Elwyn. What do you intend to do?"

"I have no settled plan as yet," replied Kate, without taking any notice of the former part of his observation. "I intend to watch narrowly the course of events, and make them subservient to my purpose. What I expect of you is to follow closely where I lead or direct."

Catharine Mailand had been the schoolmate of Florence Elwyn; but so uncongenial were their natures, that as they grew up nothing more than the civilities of society were kept up between them. Catharine Mailand was vain, haughty, cold-hearted, and revengeful in disposition, indeed there was scarcely a redeeming trait in her character; but possessing an uncommon share of vivacity, together with considerable personal attractions, her great moral defects were concealed when in society. She loved Frederick Ashton as much as she was capable of loving any one. The gentle Florence Elwyn had ever been the object of her envy, and now that she was likely to prove a rival, the most implacable hatred took possession of her breast. Robert Mailand, the brother of Catharine, differed but little from his sister, except that a bad man seldom possesses in the same proportion the expertness to devise mischief, and those qualities of mean artfulness that characterize a bad woman. As we have seen he loved Florence Elwyn, and hesitated not at the means employed to obtain her, thinking that if he could break off the intimacy between her and Frederick Ashton, there would be no obstacle to his happiness. According to the instructions of his sister he set about cultivating an intimate acquaintance with Frederick Ashton, endeavering to find out his peculiarities. Ashton found in Mailand an agreeable and pleasing companion, and very soon the two were on quite intimate terms. One day, when out on a shooting party, Ashton's gun suddenly burst, severely wounding him. During the insensibility occasioned by the severe pain and loss of blood, Mailand had him conveyed to his own residence, as affording earlier assistance from its being nearer the place of the accident than the hotel where he boarded. On examination the wound proved to be a very dangerous one, and the fever that ensued reduced him so low that his life was despaired of; but a strong constitution baffled the disease, and he was pronounced convalescent. The only solace he had while lingering on his bed of pain was the thought of his gentle Florence. "How," he thought, "could her sweet voice have assuaged his sufferings, and from her dear hand the nauseous drugs would have lost half their bitterness. But this was impossible—so he must be resigned." He had fully determined that immediately on his restoration to health he would offer to her his heart and hand. During his protracted sickness he was attended in the most faithful manner by Robert Mailand. His apparently disinterested kindness completely won upon the generous nature of Frederick Ashton, and he regarded him as his best friend, for whom he would have made any sacrifice. Propped up by pillows, Ashton was now able to sit up for a short time, and once more to taste the sweets of returning health; but latterly he had discovered an air of abstraction about his friend that sorely grieved him. He watched him closely, and when Mailand thought he was not observed, he would sit in deep dejection, while heavy sighs heaved his breast, then drawing from his bosom a beautifully wrought golden locket, he would gaze on it until the tears seemed ready to start, and, fondly kissing it, would carefully lay it away in its hiding-place. Ashton respected his feelings, and would not for worlds have had his friend know that he had been a witness of his weakness. It was true then that Mailand loved; and perhaps some heartless creature had dared to trifle with the affections of such a noble and generous soul. Ashton was almost tempted to curse the folly of man for loving, and the heartlessness of woman for trifling. At length one morning, from a dreamy reverie, he happened to open his eyes very suddenly, and beside him sat his friend, the locket lying in his hand, and he regarding it with a look of great sadness. Before he could recover his wonted presence of mind, Mailand lifted his eyes and met those of Ashton fixed on him. In evident confusion he closed his hand upon the locket—but it was too late, his secret was discovered. The thought occurred to Frederick to rally his friend upon his attachment, perhaps he might win his confidence, and by sharing his grief might lessen its poignancy. At all events he determined to breach the subject, fully persuaded that if he understood the case he could be of service.

"Nay, Mailand," said he, good humoredly, "do not be so selfish. Allow me a glimpse of the pretty face that you hold in your covetous grasp; for pretty I know it must be if you admire it."

"And as false as fair," returned Mailand, bitterly, and relapsing into his former dejected mood, seemed to preclude all attempts at further conversation. But Ashton was not to be diverted: having the welfare of his friend at heart, he determined to persevere.

"Mailand," said Ashton, with manly frankness, "excuse me if I have aroused from their repose thoughts of an unpleasant nature. Such was not my intention, neither do I desire to pry into the secrets of your heart from motives of vain curiosity; but having unknown to you, and unintentionally on my part, observed many things that led me to suspect the state of your affections, I thought that a repose of confidence might enable me to be of some service, which it would be my greatest happiness to render."

"Heaven be praised for granting me such a friend," exclaimed Mailand, as he cordially grasped Ashton's extended hand, "but, alas! you can be of no use to me, therefore it is unnecessary to trouble you with——"

"If nothing else will be gained," replied Frederick, who resumed the conversation, unfinished as Mailand had left it, "rest assured your heart will feel lighter when its burden of grief is divided with your friend."

"Impossible! naught on earth can heal the wounds of a crushed spirit, or restore happiness to the heart from whence hope hath forever departed. It began in our early youth," continued Mailand, reluctantly, "was the charm of my boyish days, and the hope of my manhood. Need I tell you how I loved," exclaimed he, fervently, as glowing with his subject he forgot his former embarrassment, and seemed now as

anxious to dwell upon the theme as before he had been reluctant. "It filled my whole soul—it became my animating principle—it gave vigor to my intellect—fervor to my devotions—energy to my whole character. And it was returned with the purity and sweetness of a young heart's first love. She was a confiding and innocent young creature—too guileless to conceal her attachment for me, and too pure-minded to deny the sweet familiarities of the innocent. Her lovely head found its resting-place upon my breast, while my hand was allowed to roam at pleasure through its rich garniture of tresses. I might look into the depths of those soft violet orbs, and drink my fill of the intoxicating delight, or if my gaze became too impassioned, and in rebuke the lovely lids drooped softly over them, my pardon was sure to be sealed upon the ripe, pouting lips. Thus we grew up and were betrothed. But why dwell upon these moments of ineffable bliss?—for years they were the light of my existence, now they are gone never to return. A change came over my beloved, and when I sought to know the cause and revive the recollections of by-gone hours, she coldly repulsed me, telling me that I must forget as she had the fancies of her girlish days, and when I reminded her of the solemn engagement between us, of which Heaven was witness, she answered with a scornful smile that I could not expect her to fulfil, or even remember engagements that were made when she was a mere child. At length she refused to see me, and I am left to bear the anguish that is devouring me as best I may."

Mailand paused overcome by his feelings, while Ashton was deeply moved at the recital of his wrongs.

"Am I acquainted with her?" asked he, in a soothing tone.

"Yes—no—that is—I mean—let us speak no more about it," said Mailand, exceedingly agitated, and evidently from different emotions than those which had just before held their sway over him.

"What ails you, Mailand?" said Frederick, astonished at his singularity of speech and manner. "What am I to gather from your strange answers?"

"Seek not to question me further," replied Mailand. "Too much has already been said; but, thank Heaven, I have not gone too far," he continued, in an under tone, as if thinking aloud. "I have been careful. He knows not who it is."

"What can you mean? Of whom have you been speaking? Tell me her name," wildly demanded Ashton, while a strange presentiment crept around his heart.

"Alas! you know not what you ask," said Mailand, fixing his eyes sadly upon him. "Would that I had said nothing; but who could have foreseen this. No, no, you could not bear it."

"I can bear anything but this torturing suspense—speak quickly," almost gasped Ashton, a death-like pallor spreading over his countenance.

Mailand returned no answer; but slowly unclasping the fingers that seemed to cling with fond tenacity to the locket, he extended his hand to Ashton. A look was sufficient. In their sweet placidity, as pure and sinless as an angel's, the lovely features of Florence Elwyn met his wild gaze. An agonizing cry escaped from his bursting heart as he sank back upon the pillow. It was the struggle of a mighty spirit. While it was going on a gleam of fiendish triumph shot across the countenance of the wretch who sat beside him, and instantly passing away, left upon it its former woeful expression. In a short time Frederick Ashton arose. His face was deadly pale, and the mental suffering of years seemed to have passed over him in those few moments.

"My friend," said he, in a voice so calm and composed, that it quite startled Mailand, "how deeply I have wronged you your suffering heart can best tell, and yet your generous spirit has returned good for evil, and cherished with your kindness the serpent who had coiled itself around your hopes of happiness, and poisoned them with its venom. Say that you forgive me, and the rest of my life shall prove how utterly I deplore the ignorance that unconsciously led me to injure you. But rest assured, nothing has passed between the lady and myself that need, for an instant, disturb your peace The love for her that I now confess to you, has never been breathed into her ear. Excuse me if I advert to unpleasant circumstances. I once noticed in her possession a counterpart of the locket you have just showed me, and so careful was she of it that I could scarce gain a glimpse, for it was, she said, painted for her father, by an eminent artist, who, ere a copy of it could be taken, went unexpectedly to Europe, and has resided there ever since."

"That copy is the one I now have, and at the time of our betrothal was exchanged for my likeness. A few months since she returned mine requesting her own; but I could not part with it."

"What could be her object in thus resorting to falsehood and deception?"

"You are reputed wealthy, my dear sir, and beside an attractive exterior you are talented and well educated. Having seen much of the world has given ease to your manner, and variety to your information. You are just the sort of man with whom a lady of taste and refinement loves to swell her train of admirers. Your attentions flattered Florence, and when contrasted with you her betrothed appeared to disadvantage; but I doubt not that in time the spell would have broken, and my heart been gladdened by a return of her former trusting affection."

"And could you love such a vain trifler? Oh! be careful, Mailand, how you throw away the sacred affections of a manly heart upon one who has proved herself so utterly unworthy of you."

"Speak not so, Frederick—she is now young and thoughtless—time and judicious counsel will correct the errors of her unformed character, and make her all that I could wish."

Ashton dropped the subject, for it was painful to both.

Was it possible, thought Frederick when alone, that he could have been so deceived? And yet the evidences were clear. In all his intercourse with society he had never met with one apparently so innocent, pure-minded: and yet this fair exterior, this semblance of innocence covered a false, and to his strict ideas of purity in the female sex, an almost impure heart.

That delicate waist had been encircled by the arm of a lover, and those loving eyes reflected his image. In this there might perhaps be no impropriety, for he was her betrothed; but Frederick remembered that her eyes had fallen beneath his look of respectful admiration, that she had walked alone with him, and her arm trembled as it rested in his. She had listened too with an air of quiet happiness to his conversation, and though she said but little in reply, yet that little was uttered in low, sweet tones that spoke of tenderness, and made his heart thrill with delight. All this was done while in the sight of Heaven she was the betrothed of another. And for what object? Money, a station in society, and the love of flirtation. Contempt for her dissimulation, and rage at having been made the dupe of an artful girl, made him at first almost furious; but after a while these emotions subsided, and thoughts of the sweet moments he had spent with the only one he had ever loved rose up before him with beauty and freshness. Must he awake from the blissful dream in which the last few months had sped away so quickly? Alas! he felt it was indeed only a dream, and already was he awake to its fallacy.

His course was at once decided. As he had made no profession of attachment to Florence Elwyn, it was unnecessary that he should see her, or offer any explanation of his conduct. His having been so long and intimately associated with the injured Mailand, would be likely to suggest to her guilty heart the true cause. As soon as he was able he intended to leave B——, and endeavor to forget the unhappy incidents of his sojourn there. But in this he was disappointed. The conflicting emotions that had agitated him in his weak state induced a return of the fever, and many weeks elapsed before he was restored to his former state of convalescence. At times, during his sickness, he imagined that the form of a female moved noiselessly about his room; but he closed his eyes resolutely upon the vision, determining that never again should false woman find a communication to his heart. Mailand's attentions were redoubled, and by careful nursing he was once more able to sit up; and to his great relief he perceived that his friend wore a more cheerful air than formerly. Clad in Mailand's elegantly embroidered robe de chambre, his feet covered by slippers elaborately wrought, and resting upon a cushion of the same beautiful style, Ashton would sit for hours and converse with his friend, while he could not but admire his delicate taste and compliment him thereon. Mailand disclaimed all merit to praise, remarking that the articles he admired were the taste and work of his sister, whose delight it was to contribute to her brother's comfort. Frederick now discovered to whom he was indebted for the many delicacies that he constantly received. At length he was able to leave his room; and one fine morning he strolled into the library, and taking up a book, threw himself upon a sofa to examine its pages. He was aroused from his reading by the voices of Mailand and his sister in the next room. The library opened into this apartment, so that he could not retire without discovering to them that he had overheard their conversation, which was of such a nature as to make this intrusion mortifying and painful to their feelings. The only alternative was to remain. He then learned that an informality existed in the will of their deceased father, in consequence of which Catharine was left dependent upon her brother. This it appeared had been known to Mailand for sometime, and he had kept it carefully concealed from his sister, who had but just discovered it. She had now determined to leave her brother, and live upon the interest of a small legacy that had been left her by a maiden aunt. It was in vain her brother remonstrated and besought her in the most tender manner to give up her plans. She was affectionate but firm, telling him that it would have been her delight to have superintended his domestic affairs; but as his house would soon have a wife to preside over it, her services would not be needed, and that her spirit could not brook having her dependence thrown up to her by Florence Elwyn, even though she were her brother's wife. She expected to leave in a few days, having accepted the invitation of an intimate friend at a distance to pay her a visit, and intended to remain with her until she made some arrangement for the future. Mailand would not listen to her leaving him so soon, urging as a reason that it would look strange for her to leave so suddenly, and while Ashton was still his guest. At the mention of this Catharine burst into tears. By the most tender entreaties Mailand finally managed to draw from her the true cause of her desire to leave him so suddenly. It appeared that a censorious world had been animadverting upon Ashton's protracted stay at her brother's, and magnified the little acts of kindness that humanity had prompted toward an invalid, into serious attempts to secure his affections. Servants had been bribed to say that she spent the greater part of her time with him, singing to him, playing for him, and endeavoring in various ways to entrap nim. In her distress she hinted that even more than this had been said, that she was unwilling to repeat. She appealed to her brother as to the falsity of these accusations, and how cruelly she had been belied. Mailand was at first silent from astonishment; but at length he succeeded in consoling his sister, agreeing with her that the best plan they could pursue was for her to leave immediately, the invitation from their friend being a good excuse, and the future was to be left to further consideration. After deciding upon this course they left the apartment together. Frederick Ashton's feelings may be more easily conceived than described. That he should be the cause of bringing sorrow and reproach upon an innocent girl was bitter anguish to his noble soul. It was true Miss Mailand had played and sung for him, and by her wit and vivacity in conversation made many an hour pass less heavily; but in this she only followed the dictates of her benevolent nature, and her great affection for her brother, of which he had seen many proofs, prompted her to be kind to his friend, and in return for her kindness she was to reap an abundant harvest of unmitigated anguish, aggravated by an accompaniment of domestic trouble. From being, as was generally supposed, an equal heir with her brother, she was suddenly reduced to comparative dependence, obliged to minister to the whims of a haughty sister-in-law, or cast herself upon an unfeeling world with a character

which the foul breath of calumny had tainted. As a high-minded and honorable man, there was but one course to pursue, which was to make her his wife, and thereby restore her to her former independence, and remove the reproach that had fallen upon her in consequence of him. Propinquity and artfulness have made many a marriage; and Frederick Ashton like many another was compelled to resign himself to the lot in which he had become entangled. Without allowing himself to dwell upon his hard fate, he offered his hand to Catharine Mailand, which, after the proper hesitation, was accepted. As Frederick was very desirous to leave B——, an early day was fixed for the wedding ceremony, which was quietly performed, and immediately after he quitted the village with his bride.

CHAPTER III.

"Alas! the love of woman! it is known
To be a lovely and a fearful thing;
For all of theirs upon that die is thrown,
And if 'tis lost, life hath no more to bring
To them but mockeries of the past alone."

"I WANT you to be my bridesmaid, Anne," said Florence Elwyn, as she entered the room where her friend was seated.

"Your bridesmaid!" exclaimed Anne, in unfeigned astonishment. "What do you mean?"

"I mean," replied Florence, in a cold tone, "that I am to be married to Mr. Hastings the early part of next month——"

"To Mr. Hastings!" interrupted her friend. "Florence I shall be vexed with you if you continue to jest in this way."

"Anne," said Florence Elwyn, in a solemn tone that could not fail to carry conviction. "I assure you that I am engaged to Mr. Hastings, and ere another month passes away will be his wife. Believe me or not as you please."

"I am compelled to believe you," replied Anne. "But at first the announcement was so sudden and unexpected that I could scarce credit it. You have been so indifferent to the many gentlemen who visit you, and so absorbed in the various studies you were pursuing that I feared your heart would never unlock its rare treasures. I knew that you possessed deep tenderness of feeling; but I doubted if one could be found who could cause it to spring forth. I did think at one time that you were interested in Frederick Ashton; but I was mistaken. That passed away, and the voice of adulation and lover's vows you have ever treated as empty air. You cannot then be surprised that I was startled at what you have just told me. But, dearest Florence," continued Anne, in a gentle, yet earnest tone, as she approached her friend and passed an arm round her waist, "forgive me if I am frank with you, in a little while it will be too late. Have you reflected seriously upon this matter—remember Mr. Hastings is many years your senior, and will probably expect you to forget the young, fresh feelings of your heart and be like him. Are you prepared to admit him into the sanctuary of your soul, and yield your entire affections to him alone? Think of the holiness, the responsibilities, the trials of a married life, and assume not rashly these duties. Nothing less than the entire yielding up of your heart to the one whom you have chosen will support you under them Florence, dearest, do you love Mr. Hastings?" said Anne, fervently, gazing into her friend's face with affectionate tenderness, as though she expected to read there the answer. Florence Elwyn averted her head. She dared not encounter her friend's earnest look. A violent agitation convulsed her delicate frame. Her lips quivered, and the breath from them came in quick and irregular gasps, while the tumultuous heavings of her breast, and the wild throbbings of her heart were fearful.

"Forbear, Anne," said she, in a voice that anguish had rendered tremulous and unnatural, "seek not to tear away the torturing mask with which I endeavor to hide a weary heart, whose griefs are insupportable and beyond alleviation. And yet why do I shrink from confiding in you? You shall know all," she exclaimed, suddenly, yielding to that recklessness of despair which realizes the utter annihilation of hope, and cares not to keep the secret of the heart longer buried. "I knew not, sought not Frederick Ashton —he was your father's guest. He solicited my acquaintance—caused me to forget my timidity—taught me the passionate delight of love. This was not done in words, it was not done in actions. It was—I know not how, but each knew that the other loved. Then came that unfortunate accident, and the illness that followed. Oh! what I suffered, and the sleepless nights I have passed praying for his restoration! Delicacy forbade any show of anxiety, and it was only occasionally that I heard from him. After a relapse he was at length pronounced convalescent, and I might hope soon to see him. With what emotions of rapture did I anticipate his visit. I would once more walk by his side, listen to his voice, gather instruction from his conversation. How tardily the hours moved on—time could not keep pace with my wild thoughts. At night I would long for morning, and in the morning I would think to-day he will be here; but day after day I expected him in vain—he came not. The anguish I endured who can imagine? I shudder when I think of it. My judgment would no longer receive the slight excuses with which I endeavored to account for his conduct. I blamed myself as being the cause of his estrangement, and yet I knew not in what I had offended. My nights were spent in pacing my chamber, torturing my mind to discover, if possible, the tidings of his marriage. It fell like lightning upon my heart, withering and consuming all its bright hopes. Oh! you of calmer soul dream not of this fierce, wild love that mocks at all control, save that of pride. All this time I was obliged to wear a smiling face to conceal the heart deep woe that was consuming me, and I succeeded. None ever dreamed, not even you, of the wild wishes, burning anguish, hidden, idolizing love, that lived on, hopeless still. But I became an altered being, with scarce a vestige of my former self left—I had grown old and wise prematurely. My first thought was to prove my power by a wealthy and honorable marriage, an offer of which being made just at this time presented a strong inducement; but reason interposed in time to spare the sacrifice. I knew that I could never again

love; and there was something too repulsive in the idea of rushing into the arms of a man whom I would otherwise have despised. I then turned to literature for peace. I determined that I would not think of him, and hoped that love would dim before the dazzling light of fame; but vain was the hope. The thought that his eye would rest upon my lines guided my pen; every page was written with the hope that it would meet his approval. When I knelt down for prayer his image was present. I struggled against these feelings; but I struggled in vain. I know that he is not to blame. I would that I could hate him, then I might forget. Thus guilty in the sight of Heaven have I lived for two years. It must be so no longer. I cannot dwell in the same place with him. I have turned away from offers of marriage with disgust. The present is different. Mr. Hastings is sensitive and high-minded, noble and generous, and as such commands my highest respect. Had I never met Frederick Ashton my heart would have delighted to yield its homage to such a man as Mr. Hastings. I regret that I have not a heart to give him in return for his manly affection; but I am not entirely a deceiver—he is aware that I have loved, although the object is unknown to him. I am going far away, perhaps the attentions of a noble and talented husband, and the new duties upon which I shall enter may divert my heart from brooding over its sorrows, and restore something of its wonted cheerfulness." Florence Elwyn ceased to speak, and burying her face upon her friend's bosom, wept convulsively.

CHAPTER IV.

> "But thro' the heart
> Should jealousy its venom once diffuse,
> 'T is agony unmix'd, incessant gall,
> Corroding every thought. * * *
> * * * * The yellow tinging plague
> Internal vision taints, and in a night
> Of livid gloom imagination wraps."

In the Highlands on the Hudson, amid a garden of rare cultivation, stood a charming villa. It was midsummer, and during the day the mansion was closed to exclude the heated atmosphere; but on the coming of evening with the river breeze the house was thrown open for respiration. At the window of a tastefully furnished apartment of this beautiful dwelling sat the lady of ——. She was simply attired in a mourning dress, which gave to her quiet and pensive features a still more melancholy expression. There dwelt a world of shadowy thought within the depths of her eyes, as leaning on her arm she gazed musingly upon the beautiful scenery around her. The lady was Mrs. Hastings, a faint representation of the timid and gentle Florence Elwyn of other days. She had loved with woman's idolatry, with that deep, deathless passion life only once may know. She had tasted too the bliss of knowing that she was beloved, and she had felt the wretchedness and despair of desertion by the beloved one—a desertion that was surrounded by mystery inexplicable. Who can paint the bitter wasting agony of the young heart, as ages of withering pain roll over the victim's head, while to avoid the sneers of the unfeeling she tortures herself to conceal the grief that is preying on her soul. Three years had elapsed since her marriage with Mr. Hastings; and within twelve months she had stood beside her husband's lifeless clay. Although toward her husband she had never known that fervid earnestness of feeling, that impulsive struggle of affection, which characterizes the marriage where hearts are united, yet she had ever felt a great reverence for him, an innate sense of dependence upon a stronger nature, and a kind wish to minister to his happiness. She carefully nursed him during his long illness; and the tears that fell upon his cold forehead, as she pressed her lips upon it, were prompted by the purest feelings of friendship and veneration. Twilight is always saddening, and the shadows deepening around increased her melancholy almost to pain. From the gloomy pleasure of this reverie she was aroused by the entrance of a servant, to say that a person wished to see her. Before she could reply, a female form, closely veiled, pushed aside the servant, and demanded a private interview. Mrs. Hastings motioned the servant to withdraw, which, being done, the intruder with a firm and determined step approached her, and throwing back her veil, paused directly in front of the pale and trembling Florence, whom she regarded with a stern and searching look. Florence started back in terror, for she recognized in the wild, haggard looking being before her, the once gay and admired Catharine Mailand.

"You know me, do you? Listen while I tell you that which will make you pray for death," she exclaimed, in a voice of haughty vindictiveness, while her strongly marked features wore a fearfully malignant expression. "You loved Frederick Ashton, and he loved you. I loved him; but I hated you. I determined he should never marry you—how well my determination was carried out time has shown. Before I had decided on any plan, Robert heard that the artist who painted your locket had returned from Europe. With great trouble and expense he ascertained his place of residence, and procured from him a copy of your likeness. Frederick's accident and subsequent illness afforded us unlooked for advantages. In the ravings of delirium your name was ever on his lips; it stung me to the heart; but I possessed an antidote. According to my instructions Robert managed the matter cautiously; and while Frederick was weak in body, and his mind consequently deprived of its usual energy, by means of the locket made him believe a story of a long engagement between you and himself, of great coquetry on your part, and subsequent rejection of him in the hope of gaining Ashton, because he was more wealthy. I then succeeded in his overhearing a conversation between Robert and myself, in which I pretended that my character was suffering in consequence of his protracted stay at our house. I knew his high sense of honor too well to allow a doubt of the result, and in a short time I was his wife. After many months spent in travelling I was anxious to return to B——. My husband opposed this mildly, but so determinately that I feared I should not prevail. I rightly conjectured that the reason he objected to return to B—— was his unwillingness to meet you. To live away from B—— I had never dreamed of.

It was necessary to my happiness that you should be a witness of my triumph. At length the furies took possession of me, and I ventured to upbraid him with his love for you. God in Heaven," exclaimed the wretched woman, tossing her arms wildly above her head, "shall I ever forget the expression of his countenance as I uttered these words, or the wild, fierce look he darted upon me as he rushed from the room. Hours elapsed ere he returned, and bitterly did I repent my rashness. When he came back he was deadly pale, and I knew that he had suffered intensely. In his manner too there was a frigidness that chilled my heart, as he coldly informed me that I might prepare to return to B——. I knew that my husband never loved me—I now felt that he abhored me; but I secretly rejoiced in the possession of an influence with which I could tame him, determining to use it unsparingly. The birth of my daughter for a while diverted me from my wicked thoughts, and somewhat softened my obdurate heart. After that event, too, Frederick treated me more affectionately, and we might even then have been happy had not the evil spirit of my destiny haunted me. The better feelings awakened in my heart soon passed away. The striking resemblance that my child bore to you maddened me, and I ceased to love her because she brought your image to my mind: besides she was the delight of her father's heart. For hours would he walk the floor, holding her in his arms, and gazing tenderly into her meek, blue eyes, or kissing her soft velvet cheek. I grudged him this happiness, and fancied he loved his child because she reminded him of you. I hated my own child, and felt a sort of savage satisfaction as I listened to the falling of the cold clods upon her coffin lid, for then I thought he would have nothing to love. Our child's death deeply affected Frederick, at the same time that it rendered me more callous than ever. From expressions that escaped him during his sleep, I was convinced that he still passionately loved you, and as my jealousy rose beyond all bounds, my conduct toward him became intolerable. If he was detained out longer than usual, I accused him of haunting about your dwelling to catch a glimpse of you. If he was grave, or inclined to solitude, I upbraided him with pining away in love for you—in short, I made his house miserable, and yet I did not mean to do so, I was actuated solely by a jealous, absorbing desire to know that he was all my own. His was a high spirit, and would not tamely brook such a despotic tyrant, accordingly he threatened to employ legal measures to free himself from me; but I vowed solemnly before high Heaven that if he did so I would throw the whole blame of our unhappiness upon you. He knew my determined spirit too well to doubt the truth of my assertion, and to shield you he bore the anguish I heaped upon him. Your marriage and removal from B—— brought no change to our home, peace had too long and distant flown ever to be wooed back. Robert who had always been wild after your rejection, gave himself up entirely to dissipation, and while out on a drunken revel was shot by one of his comrades. He sent for Frederick. Dreading that it was to make important disclosures, I accompanied him in hopes that my presence would intimidate Robert; but it was in vain—the near approach of death terrified him—he revealed all, and died in agony, begging forgiveness of Frederick and you. When my husband aroused himself from the stunning effects produced by Robert's confession he darted from the room, and I have not seen him since. I staid not to see Robert's remains deposited in the earth; but collecting some money and articles for immediate necessities, I started in pursuit of Frederick. After a search of untiring diligence, I succeeded in tracing him to New York, which more than ever confirmed my suspicions that he had sought your presence for comfort, and that you might yet be happy together. The thought maddened my brain—I slept not day or night until I reached the city. I then learned that he had embarked for Europe; and when a few days out at sea jumped overboard and was drowned. I knew of nothing that could gratify me so much as to come up here and make you miserable by showing you the happiness you have lost, and the fiendish delight I feel in knowing that you can never be his, almost repays the sufferings I have endured."

The wretched woman glared her wild eyes upon Florence as she ceased to speak, and started a few paces forward, when uttering an agonizing cry she sank to the floor. The attendants whom the terrified Florence had summoned raised the prostrate form, and to their horror discovered that she had burst a blood-vessel, and the wicked passions that had so long influenced her were ebbing away in her life's blood.

CHAPTER V.

Some time previous to the events related in the last chapter, Anne Ellison had married and removed North, which will account for Mrs. Hastings not learning the melancholy facts that had transpired in B—— earlier than she did. At the earnest solicitations of Anne and her husband, Florence was at length induced to join them in a tour through Europe, in the hope to woo back to her dimmed eye and faded cheek their former brilliancy and roundness; for her health had entirely declined beneath the repeated shocks she had received. It was sunset in Italy—that far-famed and beautiful land of the poet's dream. Florence had strolled into the garden attached to the house where they resided, to watch the rich, soft hues of an Italian sky. The thought of Frederick Ashton rose in her mind—how could she prevent it?—and unconsciously she repeated some lines he had composed for her.

"Florence, dearest Florence!" broke upon her ear in tones that sounded like the echo of departed bliss, and in a moment after she was clasped in the arms, and felt that the eyes of Frederick Ashton were looking into hers. She forgot that she believed him dead—she forgot what she had suffered. She knew only, and it was all she wanted to know, that she was pressed to the heart of him whom she had loved so long and so hopelessly. The sudden transition from unhappiness to felicity was too much for her delicate frame to endure, and closing her eyes upon the joyousness of the present, she softly murmured his

name and sank in unconsciousness upon his bosom. After the recovery of Florence, the circumstances of Frederick's sudden appearance were soon explained. The confession of Robert Mailand almost deprived him of reason, and he seemed alive only to a sense of escaping, as far as possible, from the miserable being whom he called wife. Impelled by this feeling he embarked for Europe. The vessel in which he sailed carried out another cabin passenger, who bore the name of Ashton, and whose first name commenced with the same initial as his own. This person was in very bad health, and during the night, in a fit of insanity, either walked or fell overboard, and was drowned. This intelligence reached New York by a homeward bound vessel. Catharine, whose mind was agitated and wandering, at once concluded that it was her husband, and so represented it to Florence, who afterward seeing an account of it in the newspapers, and never hearing the true statement, believed that Frederick slept in the deep Month after month was spent by Frederick Ashton in wandering over the various countries of Europe, seeking to drown in travel the bitter remembrances of happy days now gone forever, and hoping to discover that lethe for which so many have sought in vain. Time and reflection restored to his mind its wonted energy. He saw that he had acted precipitately in leaving America as he did, and without any definite object in view he resolved to return to his native land. Accordingly by the most rapid conveyances he reached Liverpool to embark. Upon his arrival there he found letters awaiting him from his agent in New York, informing him of the death of his wife, and the ill health and departure of Mrs. Hastings and her friends for Naples. Here was an unexpected and most happy deliverance. He determined to seek Florence and entreat her forgiveness. Not that he dreamed she loved him still, for he felt that she must despise the man who became so easily the dupe of artful machinations, and could treat her so cruelly without even palliating his conduct by an explanation; yet, like a fascinated bird, he felt drawn to the spot, and longed to hear of her, though uncared for, to be near her, though unseen. With him to resolve was to execute, and in an incredibly short time he was in Naples. Without much difficulty he ascertained their place of residence, which was a short distance from the city. Riding out in its vicinity that evening he caught a glimpse of Florence walking through the garden. Alighting from his saddle he approached stealthily, and concealing himself among the shrubbery, listened as she repeated his own poetry until his brain grew dizzy with happiness. Unable to restrain himself longer, he sprang forward and caught her in his arms.

* * * * * * * *

There was a wedding in Naples. A shade of silver mingled with the dark locks that clustered around the intellectual brow of the groom, and there was a touch of gentle sadness upon the meek face of the bride; but the look of satisfied bliss that responded to the love beaming eyes that were lifted to his was the surety of their future happiness.

KATE LEE'S EXPERIENCE IN FLIRTING.

BY CLARA MORETON.

CHAPTER I.

It was a busy, bustling day at Glenwood, yet a very happy day withal, for the sky was cloudless, and though it was the beginning of September, it was as warm and sunny as in June. All over the village, from Pine Hill to Hazlewood brook, children were running to and fro, bearing bouquets of dahlias, many-colored zelias, and scarlet, white and crimson phlox. These treasures were all deposited in the town-hall, where the young ladies of the village were busily engaged in re-arranging them, and placing them in vases on the long tables that stretched the whole length of the room on either side, and which were already filled to profusion with frosted cakes, wreath-surrounded pyramids, and towers of luscious looking fruit.

Down the centre of the hall, another row of tables extended, and these were tastefully arranged with every imaginable article of needle-work, from the beautifully embroidered ottoman covers, to the plain gingham sun-bonnet of a child. Festoons of ground pine and wild flowers hung from the chandeliers above, and the upper part of the windows and the pillars were wreathed with similar decorations.

Between the two doors which gave ingress and egress to and from the saloon, stood another table, wider, but not more than one fourth as long as the others, and on this dolls of various shapes and sizes —rabbit pin-cushions—barking dogs—noisy cats—humming tops, and toys of all descriptions, lay in loving contiguity. Above, in large letters of evergreen, was traced on a white ground, "Fair of the Benevolent Association." Opposite the Northern entrance door curtains of blue worsted damask, and white muslin, were looped up with tasselled cords on either side, revealing to the thirsty, the cool looking apparatus of a soda-fountain, and piles of plates and spoons awaiting their burdens of iced creams. Adjoining this was a raised platform, hung with wreaths of green, and festooned to the opposite walls on either side.

The snowy muslin of the curtains hung in graceful folds concealing the interior, but in gilt letters on a placard above, the post-office, and the office of the Glenwood Telegraph were designated. The remaining corner of the room was as wild looking a place as one might find in a days' ramble in the pine woods that skirt the Eastern part of the village. The girls could have no credit in planning and arranging that grotto-like place, for the mimic rocks half covered with green moss that formed the arching doorway, was all the work of one pair of hands; and that same pair cut from the forest two nearly half grown pine trees, and had them conveyed, with much difficulty, to be sure, but with final success, to the mimic grotto, where their towering tops touched the ceiling, and enveloped in deep shade the nook beyond. The seats were moss-covered, with here and there a shell imbedded, and the walls were hung with forest drapery.

To complete the enchantment of the scene, a sound of dropping water was heard from the darkest corner, and when the pine boughs were parted, the gleaming light fell upon a moss-surrounded basin, where gold fish were sporting. Every one knew that the only gold fish in Glenwood belonged to Dr. Bertwood's son, but there were many who did not know that Harry Bertwood planned and made that gipsey's cave for the veriest little gipsey in all Glenwood. They thought it strange that such a book-worm as he should interest himself so much about the fair; and it certainly was a rather remarkable proceeding; for the year before Harry had called the association a nonsensical affair, and did not even honor the meetings with his presence. There were some among them who remembered that Kate Lee had not then returned from boarding-school, and putting that with the fact that Kate was to be the fortune-teller, and that Harry had shown an uncommon fondness for ladies' society ever since his return from Brooklyn, they ceased to marvel at the time spent upon the grotto, and only wondered if Kate would treat him as indifferently as she had all her other admirers.

The day was fast wearing away, when Miss Bellamy, the president of the association, announced that all arrangements for the evening were finished, and those present were requested to retire from the hall, and prepare themselves for their evening's duty. Miss Bellamy then crossed over to the fortune-teller's cave where Kate Lee was standing, half hidden by a large bunch of the pine tree, and arranging some of the smaller boughs.

"Well, Katrine," said she, as she approached, "have you already commenced your divinings, or are you breathing some wierd spell to consecrate your grotto?"

"Neither one nor the other, Mag, but I am half regretting my acceptance of the part allotted to me; for I understand we are to have a fine band of music to promenade by, and here I shall be confined to my den, while you will be skipping from one part of the saloon to the other; but it is too late for regrets, so come along, Maggie, or we shall be locked in—Mr. Bertwood, my bonnet, if you please."

Again the pine boughs parted, and a young man of noble bearing stood in their presence. His hair hung in masses of short, waving curls about a forehead white as the purest marble. The strong intellect that dwelt within gleamed from the dark grey eyes, while the large aquiline nose, and haughty curve of the

mouth, relieved the face from that effeminency of expression which the masses of curls and delicacy of complexion might otherwise have given it. His hands and feet were small almost to a fault, but were perfect in their contour, and his whole bearing was that of a gentleman as he stepped from the shade, and with mock gravity bowed to the surprised Miss Bellamy.

"Why, Harry, is that you?" she said, "we have missed you for the last half hour—but see, they are threatening to lock us in."

"Yes, and it is quite time that the doors were closed, for it wants but an hour of our re-assembling," replied Harry; then turning to Kate, he said in a lower tone—

"Your leghorn, Miss Lee, I am sorry to say, has dropped into the water, and as it was owing to my carelessness, how shall I atone for it?"

"My poor, unfortunate bonnet! Oh, it is too provoking; but it must be dried immediately, for I must have it to wear to-night."

Harry bent his head, passed under the arch, and soon returned with a very rueful countenance, bearing in one hand the mutilated leghorn, which plainly showed that it had not only been dropped in, but had been taking a course of hydropathics.

"Oh, my bonnet is ruined—garland and all—and I should not care so much, but there is not another leghorn in the whole village large enough for me to wear—so you see, Margaret, I can't be gipsey to-night."

"You must, Kate, bonnet or no bonnet—there is no one to take your place; but I am sure it was very careless in you to hang it over the water."

"It was my carelessness, Miss Margaret," interrupted Bertwood.

"Well, if I was Kate, I would not speak to you once during the evening," replied Miss Bellamy.

"I am subject to her majesty's orders," said Harry, bending one knee, and proffering the dripping leghorn, "but I sincerely hope my punishment will not be so severe."

Catharine took her dripping leghorn, and holding it at arm's length, passed down the hall, followed by her companions. They parted at the entrance, and Kate hurried across the park through the shaded yard into the house, and then went directly up the staircase to her room. There, upon the bed, was laid out her dress for the evening, and as she cast her eyes upon the ruined bonnet, she exclaimed—"oh, had it not been for his provoking carelessness, my dress would have been complete," then raising her voice as she stepped back to the stairs, she cried, "Julia, come here this moment." The sound of quick footsteps was heard on the stairs, and along the passage way, and a good looking mulatto girl entered the room.

"Why, Miss Catharine, when did you come in? Mr. Travers has come. He came in the afternoon stage—and oh, he is such a handsome man—your mother talked a long while with him—and he brought a letter from Miss Emma: and I found this box in the entry after he had gone—wont you open it?—it has some handsome present in it, I'll be bound."

"I wish Mr. Travers and his presents were both where they came from," said Kate Lee, pettishly, pushing the band-box away from her with her slippered foot. Julia's lips moved, but there came no audible sound. She evidently thought that if her mistress could resist Mr. Travers' attractions, she never would love, and a look of mingled disappointment and reaction settled upon her face. She hastened to arrange Catharine's glossy curls, and turning around for the dress of velvet, which lay beside them on the bed, she espied the ruined leghorn.

"Oh! Miss Catharine, your bonnet—your beautiful bonnet!—how did you get it so wet?"

"Why, Jule, it was through the greatest piece of carelessness I ever heard of. Harry Bertwood hung it over the water, and it dropped in, and must have soaked half an hour or more; but never mind: it can't be helped now—you are lacing that gaiter rather too tight, Jule; there, that will do; now, bring me my boddice."

The last fastenings of the boddice and sleeves were arranged, and as Kate Lee stood before her mirror, and saw the reflection of her beautiful form and face, and noted how very becoming was the dress she wore, a smile lit up her fine features, and her large, dark eyes flashed with unwonted excitement.

"You look beautifully, Miss Catharine, and I wish Mr. Travers could see you now. I am sure he would teach that awkward Mr. Bertwood to know his place, yes, and to keep it too," and Jule smiled cunningly, as she marked the flush which spread over her young mistress' face.

Kate Lee made no reply, but a smile played around her rose-bud mouth, dimpling either cheek. Bounding down the staircase into the drawing-room, she stood before her mother.

"Come, mother, let me tell your fortune—give me your hand."

"No, Catharine, darling, save your eloquence for this evening! Did Julia tell you that Mr. Travers had been here?"

"Yes, and I wonder what should have possessed him to have come just at this time of all others. I'll run up and see what there is in the box, for Julia said he brought a box and letter from cousin Emma."

A few moments more, and Kate glided into the room again with a beautiful chip bonnet placed saucily upon her head, and knotted under her pretty chin with cherry ribbon. A delicate wreath of velvet ivy leaves, and small clusters of scarlet berries were wreathed around the crown; and Mrs. Lee, as she looked at her daughter, thought she had never seen her half so beautiful before.

"This is just the thing, mother, is it not?" she said. "It was just what I was wishing for the day we first spoke of having a grotto, and a fortune-teller, and oh! it was so kind of Emma to send it—I wonder how she ever thought of it. I declare, I shall be just as glad again to see Frank Travers, for this beautiful bonnet has quite put me in conceit of him and myself too."

Again Catharine's eyes wandered to the mirror, and the blush that mantled her face as her eyes met the fair reflection, was as purely beautiful as the rosy hue of a sunset cloud.

"I will run along now, mother," she continued,

"and if Mr. Travers should stop again, tell him he will be sure to find me at the gipsey's cave." Then kissing her mother affectionately, she passed out.

CHAPTER II.

The large town hall was brilliantly and beautifully illuminated. Never at any previous fair had one half the taste been displayed. Sounds of music from the concealed orchestra filled the rooms with gushing melody, and fair young creatures in dresses of snowy muslin, glided about, presiding sylphs of the fairy-like scene.

Group after group passed in, and Kate watched eagerly for Travers' coming. She remembered his fine stately figure; and a sensation of vanity stole through her heart, as she thought of his having left the fascinations of a city life to pay her a visit. The pleasure she should experience in having so faultless a figure for an escort during the evening, gratified her not a little. Impatiently she looked again toward the doorway, and saw Harry Bertwood making his way through the now crowded hall toward her.

"Now for my revenge," she thought.

"Why, Miss Catharine, you are most certainly a witch, as well as a gipsey—else how have you converted your ruined leghorn into a chip hat so very becoming?" he said, as he approached her.

"Well, Mr. Bertwood," said she, in tones of mock gravity, "if you are my father confessor, I must go back and give you its whole history, as far as I know it."

"By no means, Miss Lee," he replied, the blood mounting to his temples—"I did not intend to be too curious, but it was really such a very great change—you must excuse me."

"Certainly I will, but don't lose all your curiosity so soon, for a proper degree of it is always commendable. Now, I shall set you down for not having a very inquiring mind, if you become satisfied without hearing more."

"Well, then, I am all curiosity—pray tell me more," and Harry Bertwood became deeply interested in marking figures on the sanded floor with the toe of his small boot.

"You have heard me speak of Mr. Travers, a city friend of mine—have you not?"

"Yes," was his only reply, as he worked more diligently than ever at his mathematical problems.

"Well," she continued, "he came from New York quite unexpectedly to me this afternoon, and I have not seen him yet to thank him for so kindly bringing me such a perfect specimen of taste and beauty; but I am expecting him here every moment, and I am so impatient I can hardly await his coming."

Harry did not raise his head; and Kate, provoked that he showed no signs of jealousy, continued, "I believe that I once told you that he was self-conceited, but I begin to think that it was nothing but self-possession, for since I have returned from school I have seen so much awkwardness amongst country gentlemen that I am heartily sick of it."

Still Harry was silent, but as he raised his eyes there was a quiet smile in them which Kate did not like. At this moment several persons gathered around to have their fortunes told, and though Kate Lee's heart was throbbing wildly beneath the velvet boddice, she rattled on as rapidly as though no storm cloud had overshadowed her spirit. Laughing and jesting the gay group passed on, and Catharine lifted the wreathing vines and went into her grotto.

"And this is the evening I have anticipated so long," she mentally said—"the evening which I have never dreamed could bring me other than happiness—and now that I have found that he loves me not, what is all this music—all these mirthful sounds but mockery? I, who was so sure of his love, and thought to try and trifle with it! I to have been thus cruelly mistaken! Well, I deserve it all. Was I not trying to deceive and mislead him about Travers? Ah! his past attentions have sprung from another source than love."

Kate's meditations were interrupted here, for a tall form darkened the entrance, and, rising to her feet, she met the extended hand of Travers. They passed out together, she leaning on his arm, and after chatting awhile with him, she resumed her place at her table, which Harry had made for her out of gnarled and knotted sticks from the forest.

"My fortune, now, if you please," said Travers, following her, "and to persuade you to give me a good one; let me first cross your hand with gold," so saying, he crossed a small gold piece twice over Katrine's tiny palm, and then dropped it into the richly embroidered wallet which hung at her side. Kate Lee took the proffered hand, gazing wistfully for a moment: then raising her eyes to his with a steady gaze, in a clear, unfaltering voice she repeated—

> "Ambition is thy idol!" "Yet press on!
> For it shall make you mighty among men;
> And from the eyrie of your eagle thought,
> Ye shall look down on monarchs. Oh, press on!
> For the high ones and powerful shall come
> To do you reverence: and the beautiful
> Will know the purer language of your brow,
> And read it like a talisman of love!
> Press on! for it is God-like to unloose
> The spirit, and forget yourself in thought;
> Bending a pinion for the deeper sky,
> And, in the very fetters of your flesh,
> Mating with the pure essences of Heaven!"

As she finished, tears sprang to her eyes, for it was a piece she had committed to memory to repeat to Bertwood when he should come to her for his fortune; and as she looked into the unexpressive face before her, and saw how little the beautiful lines were appreciated, her heart yearned for one more smile from the intellectual countenance in whose light she had lived for the past few weeks. At that moment Harry Bertwood stepped forward.

"It is my turn, is it not?" he said, placing his coin upon the table.

Kate Lee raised her eyes—the same quiet smile met hers which had so annoyed her before. Like a flash of lightning through her heart passed the thought—"he has seen my weakness, and he glories in it."

All the pride of her nature arose at the thought, but with a strong effort she conquered her embrrassment, and gazing into his hand without taking it, she said slowly and impressively—

"I seal thee with a seal, I sign thee with a sign,
No woman's love shall rest on thee, no woman's heart be thine."

A laugh arose from the merry idlers round about, as Harry Bertwood, with an impatient gesture, raised his hand quickly from the table, and went forth from their midst.

The evening hours wore away. Kate seemed merriest of the merry, and though at times a shadow flitted over her sunny face as her dark eyes wandered from one end of the hall to the other, without finding the object of her thoughts—still no one dreamed that the waters of her heart were more than usually troubled. At a late hour she again crossed the park, this time leaning on Travers' arm.

"It was very kind of you," she said, "to take the trouble of the package from Emma."

"Oh, no trouble at all; but a great pleasure, I can assure you," he replied

"I hardly know what I should have done without it; but it took so large a box, I should never have thought of troubling a gentleman with it; for I believe you all have a horrible aversion to band-boxes. Why I once had a friend, quite a beau, and a perfect gentleman withal, who upon offering to wait upon a lady home from a tableaux party, she produced a huge band-box, and he stood as if he had just been taken with a cataleptic fit—rolling up his eyes first at her, and then at the box—after a while he suggested that a dray or a porter should be sent for, and she acquiescing, he gave a satisfactory 'humph,' and they trudged off together—he looking very much victimized, and we nearly killing ourselves with laughter. I have never seen a band-box from that day to this without feeling an almost irresistible desire to try the gallantry of some gentleman with it, though never yet having the courage; but jesting apart, you really deserve a great many thanks for your trouble."

"Surely there is some mistake, Miss Lee—I have had no band-box, I can assure you, under my charge. Your cousin Emma gave me a letter, but said nothing about the box—if she had, I am afraid I should have rolled up my eyes as far as your cataleptic friend's, for I have always thought baggage a bore—and a lady's band-box the most detestable thing in creation."

"Really, Mr. Travers, you are quite plain spoken; but very sensible withal, I think; although you cannot guess how much surprise I feel at finding that I am not indebted to you for bringing it. How could it have got here?"

"That is more than I can imagine, Miss Lee; but you made such an admirable little fortune-teller, you ought to be able to divine."

Kate made no reply; she was lost in thought; and when she reached the piazza she drew her arm impatiently, almost rudely out of Travers, and threw herself into a garden chair. Travers drew a seat near her, and looking earnestly in her face, said—

"I trust I have not offended you, Miss Lee—I sincerely hope I have not been so unfortunate."

"Oh! no, you have done nothing, Mr. Travers; but I am vexed with myself, and I have a foolish way of showing in my countenance when my heart is ill at rest."

"And may I not share your heart troubles, Catharine—I have flattered myself that you are not entirely indifferent to me; and it is for this reason that I have lingered by your side. Give me but one faint hope that you will love me, Catharine; and it shall be my life long study to make you happy."

Travers spoke earnestly, but respectfully; and there was a depth of tenderness in his voice which Kate Lee had never heard before. The flower-perfumed air; the moonbeams trembling through the vines, and falling fitfully upon their faces; the quiet beauty of the scene before them seemed to make it a fit time for the interchange of vows, and as Kate listened to the low pleading voice, and her eyes fell upon the really handsome face of her suitor, her heart throbbed with new emotions—emotions of gratified pride and vanity, which fell as balm upon her wounded and mortified spirit. But her reply was calm and effortless, and as the words fell upon Travers' practised ears, he felt that as yet he had awakened no heart emotions in Catharine's bosom. Again he plead long and earnestly, and when they parted a diamond ring glistened in the moonbeams upon the betrothed finger of Kate's snowy hand

CHAPTER III.

When Kate Lee went to her sleeping chamber, she found the lamp burning dimly upon the dressing-bureau; and Julia, wearied with watching, fast asleep upon the floor. For a moment she stood in front of the mirror, gazing intently at her own reflection. She had thought to have found her face crimsoned with excitement, but it was pallid as the petals of the pure jasmine flower, whose odorous breath filled her chamber with perfume. She cast her eyes downward, and they fell upon the diamond, shooting back with renewed brilliancy the feeble rays of the lamp. The events of the past evening seemed as a dream to her—Harry Bertwood's mocking smile—her foolish coquetry with Travers—his impassioned words of love—her reluctantly, half yielded promise, all pressed with a heavy weight upon her heart; and poor Kate sank upon the floor sobbing grievously, and deeply lamenting her own folly and weakness.

In the calm stillness of the night she looked back upon the scenes of the evening in surprise. How needlessly had she, in a few short hours, destroyed her own happiness forever. "No, I will be happy yet," she said, as these thoughts passed in review through her mind. "Betrothed to a man that I neither respect nor love!" she exclaimed, and drawing the ring which had pressed with such a hateful weight upon her tiny finger, she dashed it upon the floor. "What blind infatuation possessed me to listen to words of love from him?" she murmured, "when my whole heart—my whole being is another's, and that other so unlike! What matter if he does not love me? so long as I am my own I can dream of him, and pray for him in innocence, and——" she paused, the sound of a foot upon the gravel walk below fell upon her ear, and almost immediately a folded paper attached to a small bouquet fell through the open window at her feet.

"It is from Travers," she thought, and she made no movement to take it. Then again sounded the entreating tones of his musical voice, pleading for one word of hope, one smile of encouragement, and the memory of her boarding-school days, which he had pictured to her as years of hope deferred to his worshipping heart—when he had gazed upon her as a pure, bright star at a distance—hoarding up all the wealth of his affections to pour them out unceasingly before her, and her heart reproached her with anticipations of the dreariness and disappointment he would feel when she should take back the promise which she had partly made. With a half resolve to sacrifice her own happiness for his sake, she stretched out her hand and raised the bouquet. The bay leaf breathing of "deathless change," was wreathed with the "despairing" cypress and the "faithful" cedar, and from their midst a bunch of scarlet geraniums whispered in voiceless words to Catharine's heart of "disappointed hopes." With a trembling hand she unsealed the note, for she well knew that this was not the language of Travers' hoping spirit.

She read aloud.

"Catharine, when you open this I shall be far from here, and shall not be pained with the sight of the uncaring smiles which a knowledge of my unhappiness will awaken upon your face. Yes, I firmly believe that you, in all your heartlessness, will jest at my love, even as you have already jested with my feelings; and though I bitterly lament the mistaken idea which I had formed of your character, I have not power to crush the buds of hope which for the past few weeks I have woven with my being. Time and absence alone can cause them to droop and wither, and till then I shall remain an alien to my home, a wanderer upon the face of the earth.

Farewell, HARRY.

Kate Lee set as one stupified after reading the letter. Hours passed before she moved or stirred. With a knowledge of his love her throbbing heart became so calm and tranquil, that she pressed her little hand upon it to see if its pulsations were still continued. She kissed the note again and again, and looked earnestly amongst the leaves of the wreathed flowers, as if she waited for another message from their midst. The reaction from utter hopelessness and misery to boundless hope and happiness was so great, that it drove from her mind all memory of other causes of regret, and her partial engagement was as a thing which had never been. Even the announcement of Harry's absence made little or no impression upon her mind; but the one thought of his love filled it with a dreamy forgetfulness; and clasping the letter close to her heart, she threw herself upon the bed, without even unloosening the fastening of her velvet boddice; and murmuring his name at intervals she slept.

Julia, the colored maid, rose carefully from the matted floor, and taking her slippers from her feet, stole noiselessly to the side of the couch.

"Ah, I will be happy yet," repeated Catharine in her sleep, as she turned restlessly. Julia nodded significantly, and her eyes gleamed as she saw the paper which had fallen from her young mistress' hands.

"I was crossed in my love for your whims, and you shall be as happy as I have been," she muttered, as she crossed the room to the bureau where the lamp was still faintly burning. With a pin she raised the wick—scraped off the thick substance which had collected about it, and, shading it with one hand, proceeded to look for the ring.

The glittering stone soon revealed its hiding-place beside the richly carved post of the massive mahogany bedstead, and a smile shot across the countenance of the mulatto girl, as holding it close with one hand she sat down the lamp, and lifted the bouquet which had fallen from Kate's lap to the floor. Then dropping the window curtains and blowing out the lamp, she took her slippers and stealthily left the room. Down the staircase and through the wide hall she passed to the back door, and gently undoing the fastenings, stepped out into the fresh morning air. The moon had long since gone down, but day was just breaking in the Eastern Heavens, and the wily servant girl wrapped her woollen shawl more closely about her, and with a quick step threaded a little path through the green fields. She spoke but once in her hurried walk, and then with flashing eyes and upraised hand, she said—

"I have not waited my time in vain—I knew it would come at last."

She approached the river, and as she passed along through the shade of the willows that skirted the bank she paused for a moment, for streaming from the lattices of a large white dwelling that stood within a grove just beyond her path, the light fell upon a pile of baggage beside the open door.

"It is as I thought—he waits the early morning coach," she said, then turning her eyes to the ground, she stood for a few moments in the attitude of one in a deep study, occasionally biting her lips as if some of her thoughts thwarted her in her plans.

At length everything was evidently arranged to her satisfaction, for crushing the delicate geraniums between her fingers, she passed in and stood beside the open door. She had just raised her hand to the knocker when Harry Bertwood, equipped in travelling cap and cloak, came through the hall and stood beside her. A gleam of hope shot across his pale face as he recognized Julia, who spoke hurriedly.

"It is you, Master Harry, that I want—Miss Catharine sent me with a message, will you come with me to the gate 'till I give it you?"

"Did she send me no note, Julia?"

"No, sir; but she sent back yours, and the crushed flowers here which she stamped beneath her feet." There was not sufficient light to show the look of agony which settled on young Bertwood's noble features, but he reached out his hand and clasping the flowers close, pressed them nervously to his face.

"Oh, be a man, Master Harry," said the deceitful girl, as she saw his agony.

"And is this all?" said Bertwood, in a hollow tone.

"Yes, all; only she bade me tell you that she is engaged to Mr. Travers, and that you might believe me, she sent the diamond ring which he gave her last evening."

"Enough—enough," replied Harry Bertwood, as he pushed the hand holding the ring from him—"enough to drive me mad."

The horn of the approaching stage-coach sounded. Julia crept away to the shade of the willows, watching until she saw the baggage fastened on, and the affectionate adieu between Harry and his parents. As she heard the crack of the stage-driver's whip she turned and rapidly retraced her steps to Mr. Lee's dwelling. Noiselessly she entered the room she had left scarce an hour before, and replaced the ring by the side of the bed-post. The grey light of morning glimmered through the muslin folds of the embroidered curtains; and Julia, whose custom had been to draw the lattices together that the light might not disturb her young mistress, now parted the curtains on either side, and then took her place upon the floor again. She laid quietly a few moments, and then, finding that her mistress still slept soundly, she purposely pushed her foot against a chair and overturned it. Kate started at the noise, sat upright, pressed both hands across her eyes, as if striving to recall some half remembered dream, and then with a cry of joy bounded to her feet. But in vain she looked for the note—for the flowers—there was no trace, not even a crushed leaf to convince her that it had been reality. The open window, the withdrawn curtains, the lamp upon the bureau, and even the diamond ring upon the floor, everything was just as she had left it. Could it have been a dream? She looked toward Julia, who was apparently sleeping soundly, with one arm thrown over her head. Again she commenced her fruitless search, and finding no clue to unravel the mystery, she threw herself upon the couch, saying—"I know it was no dream."

"Did you speak to me, Miss Catharine," said Julia, rising to her feet, and then looking with apparent astonishment from her mistress' gipsey dress to her own wearing apparel, she continued, "oh, Miss Catharine, why didn't you wake me up to undress you—how could you let me sleep so soundly—what would your father say if he knew it? Oh, dear! it is too bad, and you look so pale and tired too, and your eyes are swollen as if you'd been a crying all night."

"I was up late, Julia, and when I lay down I fell asleep without intending to; but make haste, and take these foolish things off, and bring me a clean wrapper—and, Julia, don't say anything about my sleeping in these things all night, and with the window wide open, for I know it would worry father and mother, and that is unnecessary."

"Oh, certainly, Miss Catharine," and Julia hastened to remove the dress with a smile upon her lips which she could not disguise. She then brought out of a closet a white muslin wrapper, and laying it across the bed, proceeded to brush and re-curl the long, dark tresses which hung in dishevelled masses upon Catharine's snowy neck.

"No, Julia, braid them, and put them up plain," interrupted her mistress, "and take away that white wrapper, and bring me the pink lawn, for I am pale this morning."

Julia obeyed, and when the breakfast bell rang Kate Lee descended to the drawing-room, looking far more beautiful in her simple loveliness than in her brilliant dress of the evening before; for there was a serene, a subdued look resting upon her features, which had never before found its home there.

When Mr. Travers called Kate received him alone.

"I regret, Mr. Travers," she said, "that the thoughtlessness of last evening requires the painful explanation which I feel obliged to give in justice to you as well as myself."

Kate paused for a moment, for the warm blood so mantled her face that she was painfully embarrassed. Travers waited patiently, but an expression of anger settled upon his face as Kate continued—

"I received your attentions last evening from motives unworthy a place in my heart, and which I feel ashamed to confess." Again her voice was tremulous with emotion, and her small lips quivered nervously. It was but for a moment. With a strong effort she subdued the pride which was almost choking her, and proceeded—"out of revenge from an imagined carelessness on the part of one—one to whom I have ever been partial, I devoted my conversation to you while my mind was entirely upon that one, and as his apparent indifference convinced me that he did not love me, I listened to you when I ought not to—but I thank God that I found out my feelings soon enough to prevent me from wrecking my own happiness forever, and I return the ring which I so unwillingly allowed you to place upon my finger last night, hoping that you will forgive me if I have seemed to trifle with your feelings, for believe me, I shall suffer enough with the memory of my weakness constantly before me."

As Kate ceased speaking, Travers arose and walked the room hastily.

Very different was the expression of his countenance from the look of agony which passed over Harry Bertwood's face, when Julia delivered her false message.

It was more a vexed look—a look of chagrin—a look wherein the heart had no part; but Kate saw it not, for the long lashes of her snowy lids were drooping low upon her pale face, and with her hands clasped nervously together she sat motionless, bearing the humiliation which her thoughtless conduct of the evening before had brought upon her. Those few hours of anxiety of mind had wrought a great change in Kate's countenance as well as in her heart; and when Travers turned toward her and noted the subdued loveliness of her expression, he stood for a moment as if spell bound. Then seating himself beside her, he again plead with all the eloquence of which he was master, but in vain—the words would have made as much impression upon a marble statue as upon her, but she listened patiently and replied calmly, and Travers left her after exhausting all his powers, fully convinced that there was one heart in the world proof against his many charms.

Then Kate hastened to her room, fastened the door, and upon her bended knees thanked God that the heavy burden which had so weighed her down the night before had been removed from her spirit. Her eyes were filled with tears when she arose—tears for the pain which she had been obliged to cause another, and her bosom heaved with the heart-swells she could not suppress. As she passed along to the window seat, her eyes fell upon the unopened letter which

Travers had brought her from her cousin Emma the the day before, and wondering at her forgetfulness where one she loved so well was concerned, she hastily seized it and broke the seal. It ran as follows:—

"DEAR KATRINE—I have news for you. Grandpapa's will has been found, and you and myself are the sole heiresses, fifty thousand dollars a piece. Isn't that nice, dear coz—and wont we flirt to our hearts content, and bring ever so many falcons down? Oh, I have such a charming deal to tell you, but you will be with us soon, for papa is writing to-day to uncle Will, to tell him that he must come immediately and have the estate settled, and of course he will bring the heiress with him. Don't let Travers make too much love to the fifty thousand, but I need not tell you to beware, for you well know that with all his beauty he is the most selfish, self-conceited man in creation, and this I remember you know as well as myself. Adieu, dearest, and believe me ever
Your affectionate cousin,
EMMA LEE."

As Kate finished reading another weight was taken from her spirit, for here, clear as the noon-day light, she found the evidence of Travers' sudden and *disinterested* affection. She hastened to her father's library, and placed the letter before him. He drew his daughter affectionately toward him and kissed her tenderly, and then with a quick eye scanned the contents of the letter.

"Hum—hum—you had enough without it, Kate," he said, "and now this giddy cousin is giving you nice notions. Stand up a moment till I see how much higher you carry your head, for I thought it was high enough before."

"No higher, believe me, dear father, and I do not even wish to go to New York with you, and I hate flirtations, and I——"

"Well, well, my little prude, what now?—it will be necessary for you to go to New York, and I suppose you can do that without flirting—can't you?"

"Oh, yes, but must I indeed go, papa?"

"Why, yes, child, and haven't you been saying ever since you come from school that you wanted to pay your cousin Emma a visit, and coaxing me to let you go?"

"Oh, I forgot that," said Kate, blushing, as with a very embarrassed air she escaped from the room.

CHAPTER IV.

It was the evening before Kate's departure for New York. Struggling with a heart sickness which she had never before known, poor Kate Lee leaned listlessly beside her open casement, and the tears which fell from her fringed lids were welling from a fountain disturbed from its purity, and embittered by her own thoughtlessness. Deeply had she suffered for that one evening of levity, for days had flitted away and brought her no tidings of Harry.

A quick step upon the matted floor—the rustling of a dress, and Margaret Bellamy stood beside her.

"So you are going to New York to-morrow, I hear," said Miss Bellamy, "and this is why you look so sad—is it not?"

"Yes, I'm going to-morrow, and I do feel sad; but I can scarcely tell you why."

"Perhaps it is because you are going to meet Harry Bertwood so soon," said Miss Bellamy, with a mischievous glance at Kate's flushing cheeks, and her large, dark eyes which were raised in astonishment.

"Meet him—how so?"

"Oh, you are very innocent, I see: as innocent as if there had been no engagement to meet at New York," replied Miss Bellamy, looking wondrous wise.

"You are talking enigmas to me, Margaret—but is Harry really there?"

"First reply to my question seriously and in good faith," answered Miss Bellamy, "and then I will tell you all about it. Now confess, was there not an understanding between yourselves to meet there?"

"No, indeed, Margaret—Harry did not even tell me he was going to New York."

"Well, then, he is there; his mother says he left home intending to travel, but they got a letter from him yesterday, saying that his uncle was so anxious to have him remain with him and study law, that he had finally concluded to do so. And his mother says he went off so suddenly—wasn't it queer, Kate?"

"Yes, very," she replied, with an absent air.

"And the day before," continued Miss Bellamy, "he received a band-box by the stage, his mother says, and she doesn't even know what was in it."

Kate started; a flood of crimson deluged her face; and her blue-veined temples throbbed painfully.

Merrily flew the talkative Miss Bellamy from one topic to another; but Kate's heart ached so desperately that she could not listen, and very much to her relief Miss Margaret at length took her departure.

Though the many incidents of the fair had crowded thick and fast upon Kate's mind, yet she had never ceased for a moment to wonder from what source had come her beautiful chip bonnet. Now the mystery was solved. It was a gift from Harry, who had heard her say how very much she wished she could procure one; and he had sent it anonymously that she might feel no delicacy in accepting it; and perhaps for the same reason he had purposely let her old leghorn fall into the water, so that if she should have any suspicions from what source the bonnet had come, she would still be justified in wearing the new one. Then as all this flashed through her mind, with it came the memory of her reply to his query, and with cheeks burning with shame at the thought of her answer, she threw herself upon the bed and wept long and bitterly.

"He thinks me deceitful, coquettish and vain, and I am neither," she sobbed. Then as she reviewed her conduct that eventful evening, she acknowledged how much cause he had to think so, and with a sigh of regret that she had been so untrue to herself, she arose, and dashing the gleaming tears from her eyes, she continued the preparations for her departure with more energy than she had before shown.

There was a time, and that too in days not long past, when the villages of the dear old Bay State were not linked as now with the mighty commercial metropolis of America—when steam-cars and gunpowder were associated in the minds of many as equal causes of destruction. It was in those days that the lumbering stage-coaches wheeled along over the smooth turnpike road.

Kate Lee and her father were within a few miles

of New York, when the driver stopped for the last time to change horses.

"We have a new pair for you to-day, Dick," said the ostler, leading out two noble-looking bays with erect heads and prancing feet—"they ran away yesterday with Mr. Travers, and broke his light rockaway, but they'll have more weight to draw with your heavy team, and wont be in such a hurry to smash that, I guess."

"Ah, them's the kind for me," said the driver, and cracking his whip merrily, he proceeded to fasten them in as leaders.

"Coach ready," said the ostler, opening the barroom door, and a gentleman, followed by two pointers and a greyhound, stepped out into the porch, ordered his guns and game-bag to be placed on top of the stage, and then sprang inside.

It was Travers. Mr. Lee met him cordially; but Kate's bow was chilling. A few moments afterward she drew her veil over her face, shrouding it from his earnest gaze, and enveloping herself in the warm folds of her thick shawl, she sank back against the cushions with the air of one who forbids any further intrusion. The bays dashed swiftly over the road, obedient to every motion of the rein, and at dusk drew up in front of a hotel, from which they were to take a carriage to Col. Lee's mansion.

Travers first stepped out, and gave his arm to Catharine to lean upon as she descended the steps. With a light pressure she placed one hand upon it, but turned to extricate her dress, which had caught in some portion of the seat.

At this instant a fire-cracker, thrown by some mischievous boy, exploded directly beneath the horses' feet, and with a furious plunge they darted madly forward. Travers caught Kate in his arms and placed her unhurt upon the pavement.

"My father! save my father!" she screamed, but the danger was already past, for the horses in their first plunge had overturned the coach and breaking the harness, dashed on by themselves regardless of the hooting of the boys and the screaming of the fruit venders. Mr. Lee was taken from the stage with one shoulder severely bruised, and his thigh fractured. He was immediately conveyed to his brother's house in Waverly Place, and Mr. Travers followed to ascertain the extent of his injuries.

The next morning the following paragraph appeared in the Herald.

"Last evening as the Glenwood stage was stopping in front of the Broadway House, some rascally boys threw fire-crackers under the horses' feet. They immediately plunged forward, and with difficulty a niece of Col. Lee, of this city, was rescued from the coach. Her father was not taken out until after it was overturned. He was seriously injured. Mr. Lee was formerly a resident of Alabama, and the well-known senator from that state. We hope his injuries will not prove fatal. Our reporter understood that the young lady (who is very beautiful) was rescued from a situation of much peril by a gentleman of this city, who had accompanied her from Glenwood, and to whom she is betrothed."

As poor Harry Bertwood's eyes glanced over the morning paper and rested upon this item, he felt a strange throbbing of the heart at the thought that one he had loved so well had been in such imminent danger; but it was quickly followed by a thrill of agony that another beside himself should have saved her.

He laid down the paper with the determination of caring naught for one who had proved so unworthy, and with a forced smile upon his lips, and a worm gnawing at his heart, he drew up a chair beside the glowing grate in his uncle's library, and commenced his morning's studies. But the pages of Blackstone and Coke were conned in vain. Then came the memory of dimpled smiles, of blushes, of half averted glances which he had woven into the delicate tissue of hope—then the sudden and rude awaking of his cherished dream—the insulting message of the morning, all flitted before him, and with a brow crimsoned with the memory of his mortification, he dashed the volumes upon the floor, and passed through the hall into the open air.

Weeks passed. Mr. Lee convalesced rapidly, but Kate's close confinement faded the roses from her cheek; and her heart troubles overshadowed her face, for she had waited in vain for some message—some word from Harry. Not a breath—not even a glimpse of his form rewarded her.

One evening, about four weeks from the occurrence of the accident, Kate was sitting in their room with her parents, for Mrs. Lee had come to the city immediately after hearing of her husband's injury, when her cousin Emma danced into the room, saying—

"Come now, Miss Kate, there's no use hiding from me—the tickets are bought—everything is arranged—and Howard and myself are determined you shall go."

"What now, Emma?" interrupted her uncle.

"Why, its the first night of the opera this season, and all my fashionable friends are going, and I want Kate to go with her pale face as a sort of foil beside my roses," replied the giddy Emma, leaning her face caressingly beside the transparent cheek of her lovely cousin. "And then beside," she rattled on, "I think her style will be particularly taking to *the few* who like sentimental-looking young ladies. Such magnificent black eyes! such a brow of purity! and then I can band that rich, dark hair so gloriously over the pearl round ear. Come, Kate, I've flattered you enough to get you in a coaxable humor—now, won't you go?—if you don't say yes, I'll begin again."

"Pray, don't, Emma, you've said enough to frighten mother already—see how she is looking at me now. Come, go and dress. I will be down as soon as you, although your hair is already so tastefully and skilfully arranged."

Kate Lee looped up her hair, simply fastening it with silver leaves, and wrapping a scarlet crape shawl over her muslin dress, she stood beside her haughty and beautiful cousin—the pure lily beside the queenly rose.

It was late when they entered the opera-house, and though near the conclusion of the first act, the piece was not of sufficient interest to keep the glasses in all parts of the house from the box where the two cousins were arranging their seats. Whispered exclamations of "superb!" "lovely!" "beautiful!" were heard on all sides, and Emma's eyes sparkled with mischief and fun, while Kate's exquisitely chiselled lips curved with a sorrowful smile.

The first act over—the curtain dropped, and amidst the busy hum of voices Kate's ear caught a familiar tone. She looked around. Close beside her, and in a box diagonal to the one she was in, and to which her back had been previously turned, she saw a group of strange faces, the loveliest of them all a fair young creature with rich golden curls, and large, blue eyes, which made her think of Heaven. Her delicately gloved hand rested upon the arm of one whose face was turned from Kate's, but well she knew every wave of the mass of brown hair which hung about the nobly shaped head! She saw the glorious blue eyes turned up with a pleading expression, and distinctly she heard Harry—*her* Harry answer—

"Well, Ida, to please you I will consent to wait till then; but the wedding must not be delayed longer; for you know——" here his voice became inaudible as he bent nearer, and the face of the beautiful being he had called Ida was covered with a soft, glowing blush, even to the very brow which the golden hair shaded so lovingly. Kate sighed. "Ah," she mentally ejaculated, "I do not wonder that he has forgotten me for her." The music—the piece—all was lost sight of, and Kate Lee sat motionless, pressing one hand beneath her shawl upon her heart, while again she felt that heavy, crushing weight which had so stupefied her the night of her short, but bitter experience in coquetry.

"See, brother Howard, how intently cousin Kate is entering into the plot of the play—I have not seen her with such a brilliant color for many a day," whispered Emma. And Kate did indeed seem enwrapt with the scene before her. Her neck arched forward; her gleaming eyes; her parted lips, knotted with emotion; and the deep, intense glow upon either cheek, contrasting strongly with the purity of the marble brow and faultless chin. The play drew near a close. The color was fast dying away upon Catharine's cheeks: the lights and figures danced to and fro and whirled mazily together: she made one motion to her cousin, and fell back insensible in her arms. Howard lifted her up, and with the assistance of Travers, who immediately stepped out of a side box, they bore her through the lobby to the carriage waiting at the door. As they passed the box where Harry and his companions were seated, the one whom Harry had addressed as Ida caught his arm, saying—

"Look, Harry—look, there is a most beautiful creature pallid as death—she has fainted, Harry—run with my salts—quick—quick," and Ida put a richly cut and gilded vinaigrette into Harry's hands. He did not catch a glimpse of the face until he reached the carriage. Travers had stepped in first, and now held her in his arms. As Harry stood beside them, and saw whose was the beautiful face, he started back in surprise—then seeing the agitation of Emma, who had lost all presence of mind, he proffered the salts. It was eagerly taken, but Emma's hands trembled so violently she could not hold it, and Harry took it from her and knelt beside Kate himself.

Her eyes slowly opened and rested first upon Travers. With a quick shudder she attempted to spring from him, but she was too weak, and fell back with her eyes fixed upon the one kneeling beside her. Stretching out her arms she murmured, "oh! take me from him, Harry—take me from him."

"I will, darling," he whispered, as he arose and bent over her, "I will, oh, how joyfully," he murmured in a lower tone, and he lifted her and pillowed her head upon his shoulder, while with a quick gesture of impatience she motioned to Travers to leave. The carriage whirled onward, and Harry only yielded up his burden at the doors of Col. Lee's mansion. As he rapidly retraced his steps, he murmured, "can it be that she has discovered too late that Travers' love is not as deep as mine." He stifled the thoughts and hurried onward.

CHAPTER V.

Kate was very feverish upon her return home, and her parents immediately, in alarm, sent for a physician. "Her pulse was weak and irregular," he said, "but attributed that to the faint, and thought the faint probably caused by the heat and close air of the opera-house." The minds of her parents were greatly relieved when he left, but the month passed away, and she still continued in the same low nervous state, and the physician, not knowing that the disease was in the mind, found all his remedies fruitless.

It was the first week in January. Kate, pillowed in an easy chair, was sitting beside her mother, who was looking over the morning's paper. Suddenly she exclaimed, "well, I never! I always thought it strange that young Bertwood left our village so suddenly, but here it's all explained."

"What now, mother?" said Kate, in a tremulous voice.

Mrs. Lee replaced her spectacles which in her astonishment had fallen from their place, and commenced reading, "married on the evening of the third instant, by the Right Rev. Bishop ——, H. Bertwood, Esq., to Ida, youngest daughter of Horace Abbot."

Kate uttered a low cry, and clasping her arms about her mother's neck, sobbed like a child.

"What is the matter, darling?—what is the matter, child? I was afraid you had been sitting up too long," said Mrs. Lee, as she helped her daughter to the couch.

At this moment Emma came into the room. "Kate," she said, "there is a gentleman in the parlor—the same one who helped you the evening you fainted—perhaps he has come for the vinaigrette, shall I carry it down and tell him you are ill?"

Kate started—"yes—no—wait, I will go myself."

"Why, Kate, are you crazy?" interrupted her mother.

"No, mother, but there is one thing I must and will know—if it was a dream, well and good, if not, I will know what has changed him," and Kate stood up firmly and without trembling in front of the Psyche glass, and threaded her pale fingers through the long, dark tresses, winding them into curls, and looping them up with a gleaming arrow.

"Catharine Lee, you are beside yourself," said her mother, sternly; "have you really loved that Bertwood?—if so, have more respect than to let him know it, now he is married—don't disgrace yourself, my child, I beg of you."

"Never fear, mother," rejoined Kate, "never fear

for me—see, I am strong and well again," and she arranged the folds of her dress and swept out of the room with the same firm step which had characterized her before her illness. She entered the parlors coldly and haughtily. There was no lovelight in her eyes—no misty dew upon the lashes to whisper of the wealth of love which Kate had hoarded in her bosom for the manly form before her, and with an air as distant as her own he rose from his seat, saying—

"I had hardly expected to see you, Miss Lee, having heard you were indisposed. I have called to see if your parents had any message for me to take to Glenwood—I go there to-morrow."

"Ah," thought Kate, "he goes with his bride to show his parents how fair a being calls him husband," but though it passed through her mind like a lightning's flash, she could not keep her voice from trembling as she answered, "no, I know you did not call to see me, but I was determined to know whether I had deceived myself with regard to a note which I have supposed you had written to me—did you ever throw one into my window attached to a bouquet?"

"Did I?—why ask me such a cruel question, Catharine, when you returned the note to me with such an insulting message?"

"I returned the note, Harry!—never—never as I hope for the happiness hereafter which has been denied me here—day and night have I looked for it since—but I forget—it is too late now—oh, Harry, did you really love Ida?"

"Love Ida!—my cousin's wife—I have never loved any one but you, dearest; and is it possible that you did not send Julia to me with the note?"

Kate was too happy to reply, and when soon afterward Mrs. Lee came into the room and found her leaning on Harry's shoulder, his arm pressed round her waist, she stood a perfect tableau of indignation and astonishment.

Kate gave her mother no opportunity to speak, but immediately rising, said—

"Mother, Harry is not married—it was his cousin Hector, and at Ida's urgent solicitation he waited to be groomsman—oh! mother, I am so happy."

Mrs. Lee smiled at Kate's earnestness, and, turning to Harry, said—

"I find we have been employing the wrong physician; but I think even you will be obliged to prescribe rest and quiet, for Kate's cheeks have a very feverish glow."

"I never was better in my life," interrupted Kate, "but come and sit beside us, until I tell you what a deceitful part Julia has acted toward me." Kate then repeated the message which Julia had given Harry the morning of his departure, and added, "what do you suppose, mother, could have made Julia so ungrateful, for I have always treated her kindly, and you know it was at my urgent request that father brought her North with us."

"Ah, Catharine," replied Mrs. Lee, "I remember it well; and it may be for that very reason that she has acted thus, for she did not want to come North, but preferred remaining in slavery because she wanted to be married to a slave on my brother's plantation; but I thought more of gratifying your wishes than hers."

"Oh, that must have been very hard for poor Jule," said Kate, "I did not dream that she was revenging herself for one of my childish whims—well, now that I find it was Julia instead of Harry that did not love me, I can better bear it; and poor Jule shall be sent back with money enough to buy her lover, and they shall be all the happier for their separation."

"Even as we are," whispered Harry.

I have not room to tell of Kate's rapid recovery—of Emma's delight at the prospective marriage—of the strong attachment formed between Kate and her supposed rival Ida—nor of the reproaches of Julia's conscience when she received from Kate's hands a sufficient sum to purchase her lover from bondage—all these, and a thousand things beside I must skip over, and sketch a scene in Glenwood for you several years from the period of which I have been writing.

That beautiful and airy cottage with its gothic front and verandah sides, is the summer-house of Harry Bertwood and his devoted and loving Kate. The little path that winds through the shrubbery and clasping vines on the right, terminates at the door of a little dwelling far back by the orchard. In a neat front room—on the matted floor—sits a mulatto woman, holding a little girl two or three years old in her arms, while a little boy of five summers at least is by her side, begging earnestly for a story.

"Oh, nurse, tell me just one—or else I'll go and teaze mother," said the little fellow. At this moment a shadow darkened the window, and the little one in the nurse's lap clapped her hands merrily, and sprang forward to meet her mother at the open door.

"Ah, Julia," said Mrs. Bertwood, "you keep these children here always, I believe—how can you have so much patience with their noise?"

Tears sprang to the eyes of the woman as she answered, "how much more patience did you have with me—forgiving me for nearly separating you forever from one you loved—giving me the means of taking my husband from slavery, and building this comfortable home for us—oh! my dear, young mistress, I can never repay you for one half the kindness which you have shown me, but God will reward you—I am sure he will," and she kissed the extended hand respectfully and fervently.

Kate's pleasant cottage is in sight of her father's more spacious dwelling, and only separated from it by a garden blooming with choice roses, and ornamented with vine-covered trellices and arbors, which it is the especial province of Julia's husband to keep in order.

The last visit which Emma Lee made her cousin, she entrusted her with a secret, which is now a secret no longer; for this week Emma Lee laid aside her visiting cards for a new pack engraved with the name of Mrs. Horace G. Fisher.

Mr. Frank Travers is the happy husband of a hundred thousand, with the miserable incumbrance of an invalid widow of a West India planter. He daily listens to her account of her failing strength with a commendable degree of fortitude; and is entirely unaware that she has executed a will in favor of her brother, who is waiting patiently for the hour when the establishment shall change owners.

THE LAST DECLARATION.

BY MRS. JOSEPH C. NEAL.

"I spoke to her—she censured not;
I told her—now I scarce knew what."—C. H. HOFFMAN.

"I've been in love some sixty times,
And always thought the newest fairest."—PARK BENJAMIN.

COUSIN FRANK was a jewel of a man. He was in society when I was a child, wearing pretty sashes, and being carried into the parlor to be called by the visitors a "little dear," when mamma was in the room, and a "little torment" if she went out of it.

That was fifteen years ago, almost—and cousin Frank is still a ladies-man, as well liked as ever, and vastly more agreeable. I think that dark, glossy moustache improves his face, he has cherished it since his last winter in Paris—and his figure is so commanding—not too tall, nor too large in any way. His hand is delicately fair—almost too much so for the son of honest republican parents; but his eyes—oh, such eyes! dancing with good humored glee, they would provoke the staidest lady of you all to mirth. His hair waves just as gracefully as ever, but I do not think it is quite as luxuriant as it once was—however, we will pass that point without further comment.

There!—how like you my hero's portrait, imperfectly as I have drawn it? Gay, agreeable—always at leisure—the life of every party or social gathering he attends, and quite as loveable in our own little circle where there are no hearts to be broken; wealthy too, and of a manly presence, do I not hear you ask why Frank Graham has never married? Many have been before you in that query—I hear it asked almost every evening we are out. I was saucy enough to inquire myself not many years since, and so I am prepared to speak upon the matter. I shall betray no confidence, and Frank will only laugh at the record.

It was a clear night in mid-winter, stormy and cold. Papa and mamma were just setting forth to a bridal party, when Frank entered, and, to the astonishment of all, said he came to spend the evening with me.

"Not going to the party!" said my mother, in surprise.

"*No*," said Frank, firmly, as if he did not care to listen to any questions on the somewhat strange resolve.

"Ah—ha—and now I remember—well if you really are not there to-night, others than myself will think you a rejected suitor of Anna Marston; you know it was whispered, my dear, that——" said mamma.

I thought Frank unusually careful as he folded mamma's crape shawl about her, and just then he was so awkward as to entangle the fringe in his watch-chain. By the time it was extracted, mamma had forgot what she was going to say.

"Take good care of Ellen," were mamma's last words, as Frank handed her into the carriage.

When I found that in the plenitude of his good nature he had come to stay a whole evening alone with me, I could have smothered him with kisses. "What shall we do?" I asked, as I waltzed gaily through the long rooms. "Come, sing that duett Clara Waterman likes so much—or shall I read you Susie Bradley's last letter?—ah, ha—you cannot guess what she says of your eyes."

Cousin Frank was not inclined to sing, he would not even guess what Sue had said of him; and I began to suspect that he had come to be amused instead of amusing me. At last he roused himself somewhat, and asked, "where was the chess-board? Would I not like to check-mate him?" To bring up stupid chess, of all things, on such an evening!—when he could talk so pleasantly too—for his descriptions of Paris and Rome were far more interesting than any book of travels I had ever read. I declare it was too provoking. But I did not make the least objection; I brought the chess men, arranged the stand myself, while he composedly sat quite still, gazing intently into the fire, now and then knocking his boots together with a ringing clank, as much as to say "confound it!" Nor did he move when I was all ready to commence the game—he did not even seem to remember that I was in the room. "Never mind," thought I, "all in good time," so I rang for some fruit, and the cake-basket, and amused myself by watching the changes of expression which flitted over his face.

"Cousin Frank," said I, at last, pausing in my demolition of some unusually fine grapes—"cousin, these grapes are very nice," and I held the luscious cluster before the fine light temptingly.

"Ah, yes," he ejaculated, "a fine voice, very fine, but—oh, that's you, Ellen, isn't it?—well, little one, about that game at chess."

So it was commenced—but Frank lost pawn after pawn—a knight, a castle—and at last as I triumphantly captured his queen, he threw the pieces together with one sweep, and voted chess a bore.

"Come, Ellen, let's chat—pass me that fruit knife—don't you wish I was a little less irritable?"

"But, Frank, what is the matter with you? I never have seen you so quiet."

"So stupid you mean—but never mind, I'll make amends. What shall I tell you of?—my presentation?—how Queen Vic was dressed?—what she said, and all that? I will promise to answer any query,

however much my memory or my imagination may be taxed."

A sudden thought came over me.

"Never mind the queen," said I, "but tell me one thing—will you now?—recollect you have promised to tell me *anything* I might ask."

"Yes—pussy, anything—what may it be?"

"Cousin Frank, *why did you never get married?*"

Oh, how heartily he laughed—I was quite relieved, for somehow I feared after I had spoken, that I might have roused some painful recollection, or—I did not know exactly what.

"And pray, you little interrogation point," (had Frank heard what mamma had said of my growing crooked—I had half a mind to be angry) "what gave you that fancy? Has any good aunt chosen a new lady-love for me, who 'would make such a nice domestic wife?'—or has your father been wishing he was as free as bachelor Frank? Perhaps you have a lover; good, tell me all about him, he is such a charming little man I have no doubt; black eyes—pink cheeks, and all that, just like your famous wax doll I brought you from Paris."

"It's *years* since I've seen a doll—do you know I was sixteen yesterday," said I, indignantly, "and besides I haven't any lover, and never shall have," ("as I see," I was going to add, but prudently restrained the terminatim of my sentence.)

"Well, I have promised and I must perform, though after all it's no great secret why *I* never was married. The fact is those who would have pleased me did not hear your good opinion of cousin Frank; and those whom I might have pleased did not seem to me worth the trouble. So after being very near matrimony all my life, I never have quite attained to that felicity. Will that satisfy you?"

"But were you never in love—really downright in love?"

"Oh, yes—a hundred times at the very least. There was cousin Sophie—I was devoted to her for six months; but your mother once hinted that she wore false braids or curls, and I never could think of her for a wife after that. Then came Miss Ellis."

"What the beautiful Miss Ellis—mamma's old friend?"

"The very same—beautiful indeed she was, but with no more intelligence than your doll we were just speaking of. Lizzy Lesten—she was quite a belle ten years ago, very sprightly and vivacious, but Lizzy inclined to be something of a vixen I thought; I always held a distrust of Lizzy's *nez retrousse*. Then Clara Rush came, and fifty others—the list is quite too long for recollection. There was always some fault though—either in the demoiselle or myself that put a finis to our friendship. There was another cousin you have never seen, Harriet Ward; I had almost come to the point of a declaration—but one day, at a dinner party, I noticed her eating fish with her knife—bah—the recollection is painful even yet; her sister was pretty, but she never looked well in the morning. If you really knew my horror of a slovenly wrapper and curl of papers! Ellen never let your lover get a glimpse of you in deshabille—it will be the end of your matrimonial prospects, I warn you."

"I am very certain he never will—I never shall have a lover, Frank."

"Don't speak so mournfully, *ma belle*, there is plenty of time for that consideration—but have I satisfied you?"

"Not quite—one thing more, were you ever *refused?*"

"Now you have indeed brought me to the confessional! What a mortifying reminiscence you have conjured up. Will nothing less than a straight forward reply satisfy you? Do you leave no corner for evasion—plump yes or no?"

Once more I clapped my hands in delight; I was inexorable—he had promised to tell me all I should ask, nothing less than a full recital of the whole affair would serve me. Was not cousin Frank kind?—he promised if I would be quiet, would never tell mamma a word, (it's so pleasant to be a confident) and would finish that purse I had been so long intending to *crochet* for him—that he would tell me word for word all about the last declaration he had ever made. Just imagine how easily we were sitting—what with the gas and the blazing grate the room was almost as light as day; the dark crimson furniture looked so comfortable; and on the table, which was drawn quite close to the fire, was a tray of grapes and ruby cheeked apples. I sat on an ottoman quite at Frank's feet; while he leaned back at ease in papa's own lounging chair.

"It is two or three years," said he, at last, "since I first met the lady who was so nearly your cousin. I remember distinctly seeing her enter this room, for it was at one of your mother's little musical parties, (they were great bores sometimes by the way.) She was a stranger to me, as were many of the younger ladies who had come out while I was in Europe; so I asked Ned Mitchell who she was. Finding her to be an intimate acquaintance in the family, and being well pleased with her queen-like figure and graceful movements, I requested an introduction—was graciously received—and we were soon floating down the stream of musical small talk. She had a magnificent hand and arm, and on the whole I was much delighted with the acquisition to my visting list. I had the pleasure of handing her to the piano; her voice was a rich, full mezzo soprano, and she sang a cavatina from Lucre Borgia very well—very well indeed; then came another chat as we stood in the recess of that window—there were heavy blue and fawn curtains there then; these crimson affairs are not in good taste."

I bowed in assent. Frank's opinion in all such matters was law, so I resolved to ask mamma to have them changed for blue and fawn—quite forgetful that the whole rooms had been refurnished since that important music party, and very possibly blue curtains would not be quite the thing with crimson velvet chairs and lounges.

"However," continued Frank, "we did not coquette at all; we spoke gaily and seriously on Bulwer's new novel, and I described his appearance at Sir John Graham's literary dinner party, which I had attended just before leaving London. Then we spoke of Miss Lesten's voice, she was singing a duett from Norma

with your mother; and last of all the conversation ended by both declaring a love for simple ballads. I recollect asking her to sing me 'The Lass O'Gowerie,' but as there was no opportunity she could not, but promised that the next time we met she would grant my request.

"Two or three weeks glided by, and I had almost forgotten my fair friend. Your mother had ceased to rally me on what she chose to call my devotion to her the evening of our introduction; but one evening I recognized her at the theatre, and as Ned Mitchell and his sister were of the party, I ventured to join them at the close of the second act of Ion, which was the play that evening. She received me very cordially, and in conversation I reminded her that I had not yet listened to my favorite ballad; this ended in an invitation to call socially with Ned, (it seems she was a school friend of his sister's) and she would sing English and Scotch ballads for me until I was weary with listening. Of course I averred that would involve a visit with no conclusion, and of course her reply was, I should soon be happy of an escape. People are obliged to say many things they don't mean, Nellie—particularly gentlemen—that is if they expect to be liked in society.

"I thought of my juvenile introduction to mamma's friends, and did not dispute the fact of such things being said, though I had my doubts of the necessity for them.

"So I called, and thought she was even more pleasing at home than in society, she conversed remarkably well, and sang very sweetly; though I remarked to Ned as we walked home that the upper tones of her voice were neither so clear nor so strong as they might have been with proper cultivation. From that time I visited the house frequently, and at last the gossips began to say that my attentions were quite pointed—your mother went so far as to remark to my fair friend, 'that Frank needed nothing but a wife to whom he was devoted, to make him the best and kindest of men,' and then she came to me offering congratulations. I was thunderstruck! the possibility of addressing the lady had never occurred to me; I had visited her as a pleasant acquaintance, and had not dreamed that she regarded my attentions as in the least lover-like. My aunt had hinted that it was otherwise, and perhaps—dolt that I was!—the lady herself thought so too. With a desperate resolve I set forth on a visit determined to watch her narrowly, and if I found any indications of peculiar interest on her part I would—no I could not quite make up my mind to propose.

"She welcomed me with the greatest cordiality, and from habit, after a few minutes chat I requested her to sing.

"'Here is an old favorite,' said I, turning over the music which lay upon the piano, 'and I have not heard it for many a day—you will sing this, will you not?'

"She started as I placed it before her, and she glanced at the title. I saw a crimson flush steal over brow and cheek—'no, anything but that,' she said, astily.

"I do not know what induced me to persist in my request, perhaps my curiosity was roused, for the song was one of those common place affairs, that is the words, though the melody was very beautiful. After a somewhat urgent solicitation she consented, and as she sang

> 'My soul in silence and in tears
> Has cherished now for many years
> A love for one who must not know
> The thoughts that in my bosom glow.'

"I noticed that her voice trembled very much, and in the second stanzas

> 'Ah, let me rouse my slumbering pride,
> And from his gaze my senses hide.'

she fairly gave way, and tossing the music one side rose hastily, saying, 'some other time it shall be finished for you,' her cheeks and brow were still crimson, and I saw her lips quiver as if she strove to quell some painful emotion.

"Was not here proof enough?—true it was not years since I had first known her, but several months had passed, and we had met very frequently. What a villain I had been, I saw at once my folly—I could have cursed my own want of thought. There she sat, poor girl, nervously twisting a tassel that depended from her waist, and now and then stealing a half fearful glance at me, as if to notice if I understood her strange tremor, fearful that she had betrayed her secret. I remember making some strangely disconnected remarks, and seized the first opportunity to bid her good evening. Oh, what a walk was that—I paced for hours in the moonlight, forming resolutions for my future conduct, and recalling any little circumstance of our friendship. Now that the veil had fallen, how plainly I saw her preference for me, and I felt that all the reparation in my power was due to her. Hard as it was to give up my bachelor freedom, I resolved to beg her acceptance of my hand and fortune—and, must I confess it, there was a strange tremor about my heart whenever I thought of the appealing glances I had that evening met from her eyes, which seemed to predict *that* it would be included in the offering. Two or three days passed: every evening I was firm in my resolution to act like a man toward her: each morning that resolution faded as the sun rose. You are not an unembarrassed bachelor, Nellie, so you can have no idea of the tremendous struggle. At length I began to think I might have been deceived, and—so perverse is man's nature—the thought was almost painful to me What with dreaming of her at night, and thinking of her sweet face by day, I had become not a little interested in your mother's friend. The die should be cast—that I was determined upon—and I resolved to make that very song the bridge, as it were, of the fearful chasm I intended to leap: I would ask her to sing it again, and if the same emotion was visible, I would hail it as an omen in my favor.

"I am sure she blushed deeply as I entered the room where she was sitting quite alone. I am *not* sure that I did not also, if an old bachelor can by any possibility be supposed to blush; at all events my hand trembled as I clasped her own, which was frankly extended.

"The moment arrived that was to decide my fate—I had handed her to the piano, and again placed that song before her—again she declined singing it, now more firmly than before. But I was inexorable—no other song would do—*for me*—would she not please *me* so much as that? and with a scarce audible voice she commenced the strain. When she came to the lines—

'They cannot see the silent tear
That falls unheeded when none are near,
Nor do they mark the smothered sigh.'

I could scarce refrain from clasping her to my heart, and telling her that her sorrow was ended—the strain arose, tremulously, feebly—again she raised that appealing glance, and then suddenly ceasing, she covered her face with her hands, and I am sure I heard a sob—oh! how mournfully it smote upon my ear!

"She left the piano, and throwing herself upon a lounge, I saw tears stealing through the soft, white hands that covered her face. I could endure suspense no longer—I knelt beside her—I strove to clasp one of these delicate hands—I know not to this day exactly what I said, but I am sure I poured forth a passionate entreaty that she would give me the precious right to kiss these tears away.

"Nellie, imagine my consternation when she rose haughtily, and said in the coldest tone of surprise—'Mr. Graham!'

"It was enough—it recalled me to my senses—I stood before her in an instant, and will you believe it, I reproached *her* for leading me to believe that she had not been indifferent to my attentions.

"'Never!' was her brief reply, and her eyes flashed gloriously.

"Nell you have no idea how like a queen she stood there—or how like a slave I was humbled before her. But I dared to expostulate—the song, I said: whence her emotion? twice had she trembled as she sung the strain: the tears were even yet undried that it had called forth. Nor was my astonishment less when she burst into a merry peal of laughter and clapped her slender hands in perfect glee. I waited, however, calmly as I could with the blood boiling at my heart, until she should see fit to explain. At length she extended her hand kindly, and begging me to be seated, said—'let us be friends again, Mr. Graham—this is too ridiculous'—and once more that musical laugh rang through the room.

"And so I gathered the cause of my foolish conclusion. It appeared that my passing remark upon the quality of her voice had been reported to her—not forgetting my opinion that the upper notes were not as strong or pure as they should be; this had made her always diffident in attempting songs in a high key where I was the listener. 'The Dream is Past' was a particularly difficult air it happened, and hence her reluctance to sing it for me; hence too the tremulous tones I had noticed the first time she sang it. This evening the recollection of her former mortifying failure made the matter even worse, and as she noticed what she supposed my critical attention she became embarrassed, and at last gave way to a childish burst of vexation as she found herself adding discord to discord.

"There was the whole plainly told—but had she not received me always with evident pleasure? Confound Ned Mitchell's gossipping report of my foolish remark!

"Yes, she confessed that she had ever been pleased to meet me as a friend of—of Edward's—could it be possible I was not aware of their recent engagement?

"Do you blame me, Nell, for rushing from the room at this unkindest stroke of all? I had been proposing to the affianced of my most intimate friend! My own vanity had led me to the mortifying act."

"Well, but you were good friends after all, were you not? Did you ever meet her afterward?"

"Yes, she was kind enough to keep my secret from all but Ned; and after a time I called at the house as before, though not so frequently, for a feeling of the deepest mortification always came over me as I saw that piano, and once or twice she wickedly said with a mischievous glance toward me—'yes, I will sing Mr. Graham's favorite, The Dream is Past!'"

"The dream *was* past of a truth—and I never have been so presuming as to dream again of any fair lady. So, coz, you have the veritable history of my 'last declaration.'"

"But who was the lady, Frank? Did I ever see her?"

"What? have I not told you her name? I thought you knew it was *Anna Marston*."

I saw it all then, the secret of cousin Frank's absence from the bridal party—but I was again puzzled, she had not married Ned Mitchell.

"No, there was some lover's quarrel in which Ned was to blame, and he had proved himself unworthy of her by never explaining the matter; so after a year or more had passed she consented to become Mrs. Willis—as Mrs. Willis I wish her all happiness; but I shall not go there to-night to tell her so."

Cousin Frank relapsed into his dreamy reverie, and I meditated upon the story I had just listened to, wondering, as I watched the flickering fire-light, how any man could summon resolution sufficient to declare himself at all. I am sure if I were refused it would prove a *last declaration* as well as a first.

LIZZY LAWSON.

BY T. S. ARTHUR.

CHAPTER I.

March, with its gusts of snow and rain, its chill winds, and its fitful gleams of sunshine, had passed away, and April had come in, with smiles and tears to fill the swelling buds with life, to open the blossoms, and the fields with emerald beauty.

Lizzy Lawson had been all the morning among her flower-beds in the garden, listening sometimes to the blue birds and sparrows, sometimes pausing in her pleasant occupation to muse dreamily about things vague and dimly perceived in her mind, and sometimes caroling as gaily as the feathered warblers that showered white blossoms from the apple tree upon her head. At last, with a basket-ful of snow drops, white lilies, crocuses and jonquilus, Lizzy sat down on the low stone-wall of the little garden, just where the rude pillows of the gate-way rose, half buried in an overshadowing tree, when a young man came up, and with a graceful bow and smile, asked for a glass of water.

The earnestness with which the stranger fixed his eyes upon Lizzy, caused the rose tint upon her cheek to deepen into a rich crimson. It was some moments before she could ask him to walk into the cottage of her mother, and be seated until she went to the spring.

"Is the spring far?" asked the stranger, still looking earnestly into the purely beautiful face of Lizzy Lawson.

"Oh—no, sir! It is but a little step. I will be back in a minute."

"I am sorry to trouble you," said the young man.

"It is no trouble, sir. None at all."

And Lizzy glanced from the room, while the eyes of the young man followed her admiringly. Why did her gentle heart, so full of truth and innocence, flutter like a bird in the hand? Why did her cheek burn? Why were her thoughts all in wild but pleasant confusion?

While Lizzy was gone, the young man occupied himself with looking about the room and noticing the various articles it contained. Everything was very plain, yet all was neat and clean. At length the flowers, that Lizzy had in her basket, attracted his eye, and he felt a wish to have them; so when the maiden came in with her pitcher of cool water, and he had satisfied his thirst, he asked her about the garden which he could see through the door; if she were fond of flowers, and half a dozen other questions, which were answered with half timid modesty that was very beautiful to look upon. Then he said—

"I really feel like robbing you of these snow-drops, crocuses and lilies, their perfume is so sweet, and they are so pleasant to the eye. But it seems hardly fair to do so."

"They are yours in welcome," returned Lizzy, pleased, she knew not why, at the request, and she began gathering up the flowers she had thrown loosely upon the table—their perfume had already filled the room. They were soon arranged with much taste and tied into a little bouquet, which was presented to the stranger with a delicacy of manner that was truly charming. He bowed, while he looked earnestly into her face; thanked her for her kindness; bowed again, and then slowly retired.

Lizzy stood for at least five minutes in a thoughtful attitude, and then went up stairs to the chamber of her invalid mother.

"Who was that, Lizzy?" was asked, as soon as she came into the room.

"A gentleman who wanted a glass of water?" replied the maiden, looking for an instant into her mother's face, and then letting her eye wander about the chamber.

"He staid a good while, I thought."

"I had to go to the spring."

"What was he talking so long about, Lizzy?"

"He asked me about flowers—if we had many in the garden; and if I were fond of them. I had just brought in some jonquilus, and lilies, and snow-drops, and he asked for them; so I tied them up into a little bunch and gave them to him. Wasn't that right, mother?"

"I suppose it was, dear. Did you know him?"

"No, ma'am. I never saw him before."

"A student from the college, I suppose."

"Very likely."

No more was said on the subject, but Lizzy could not get from her mind, the dark-eyed, polite, affable, and evidently admiring stranger. That night she dreamed that he came again; that she had a bouquet culled from the most beautiful spring flowers in her garden all ready for him; and that he kissed the hand from which he received it. She woke with a thrill of delight, and sighed, involuntarily, that all was but a dream.

At the same hour, on the next day, Lizzy came in from the garden, with a bunch of the sweetest blown flowers she could find, and while she sat arranging them into a tasteful bouquet, the form of the strange youth again darkened the door.

"I am sorry to be so troublesome," he said, with a respectful, yet half familiar smile, "but I have had a long walk this warm day, and the recollection of the cool, delicious water I received from your hand yesterday, was too vivid, and made the temptation to trespass again on your kindness, too strong to be resisted."

The eyes of Lizzy sunk beneath the ardent gaze of the young man, while a blush overspread her face.

"It is no trouble," she replied, while her voice slightly trembled.

And then she asked the young man to come in and sit down while she went to the spring. When she returned with her pitcher, he had her flowers in his hand, and said, as he looked at them admiringly and inhaled their perfume—

"These are very beautiful, and if I dared, I would again beg from you some flowers. My room has been fragrant since yesterday with those you gave me."

"Take them with pleasure," answered Lizzy, as she poured for him a glass of sparkling water. "I have many more in the garden."

"This is delicious," said the youth, as he drank from the brimming glass a deep draught of nature's own beverage—"I think I never tasted finer water."

This time the young man lingered longer; and made himself more at home with Lizzy. He told her that he lived at the South, and had a sister just her age, whom he loved very much. That he was a student at the college, and should remain only a few months longer, when he would complete his collegiate course and return home. He then made bold to inquire of Lizzy if her father and mother were living, and learned from her that her father had been dead some years, and that her mother was then sick, but would be about again, soon, she hoped.

"Lizzy, dear, was that the same person who called yesterday?" said Mrs. Lawson, when her daughter came up stairs.

"Yes, mother," replied the maiden.

"What brought him here again?"

"He asked for a glass of water, and I got it for him."

"But he staid a long time—longer than he did yesterday."

"I could not help that, you know, mother. He was very polite, and it would have been wrong for me to have treated him rudely."

Mrs. Lawson did not know, exactly, what to say.

"What was he talking about?" she asked, after musing for some moments.

"He talked about my pretty flowers, as he did before; and also spoke of his being a student at the college."

"I supposed as much."

Mrs. Lawson said no more, and Lizzy went down stairs again and busied herself about her daily duties. She sang at her work, as usual, but her voice was lower, and its expression tenderer than before.

CHAPTER II.

Rufus Cameron, the young man alluded to in the preceding chapter, was the son of a wealthy planter, residing near Augusta, Georgia. He had been over two years at Yale College, and was now in his third and last year, after which he was to return home, and prosecute the study of law with the view of making it a regular profession. He was in his twenty-first year. The father of Rufus Cameron was the descendant of a Scotch family. He removed to the South when quite a young man, and married there. His wife had all that ardor of temperament which we find in a Southern climate, and was, in this respect, quite the opposite of her grave and somewhat phlegmatic husband. In their son the peculiar leading features of the parents' minds were happily blended, the one balancing and neutralizing the other, just enough to give energy and activity of character with ardor of purpose, well controlled by a cool judgment.

The young man, forewarned by his father, of the dangers that beset his path, especially in the promiscuous associations of college, had held himself considerably aloof from the main body of students, and remained contented with one or two intimate friends of the better class. In most cases, these had been longer at college than himself, and, closing their final terms at the institution, one after another, left him, during his last year, pretty much alone so far as intimate companionship was concerned. Many hours of close confinement and study made exercise essentially necessary for health, and to gain this, Cameron was in the habit of taking long walks, every day. In one of these, he had been induced, from excessive thirst, to go a short distance out of his way to ask for water at a little white cottage, to which his eye had often been attracted in his summer rambles, by the beautiful multiflora and honeysuckle, intertwined, that clambered over the porch, and hung like rich drapery about the windows. The cooling draught he sought, he had expected to receive from the hand of some aged crone, or tall, withered spinster For the lovely vision that met his eye, he had not been at all prepared. No wonder that he saw but to admire, when his eyes first fell upon Lizzy Lawson, for she was a sweeter flower than any that grew in her garden which she so loved to tend. Her mother's sequestered cottage was in a little dell, half a mile from Hartford, and was hid from view by many tall trees, except from one or two points. Here Lizzy expanded into womanhood, unconscious of her own loveliness, but without receiving many of the inestimable

blessings of education. She was a wild wood flower, beautiful and fragrant.

On the day succeeding that on which young Cameron met Lizzy, the temptation to call upon her again was too strong to be resisted. He felt, the moment his eyes rested for the second time upon the maiden's face, that she had expected him, and he felt a pleasure, the source of which he did not pause to inquire. This time he sat longer, and ventured to introduce himself, and talk to Lizzy of his sister, who, he said, was just her age, and looked like her.

The warm Southern blood that ran through the young man's veins, was now too little tempered by the colder current of the North that had given his mind in all things else so calm a temperament. He thought of little beyond the fact, that Lizzy Lawson was the loveliest creature he had ever met—as innocent as lovely, and as confiding as innocent. He had no intimate friend at college; the one to whom he was most attached, having gone home, and his heart was yearning for companionship. Could he find so sweet, so pleasant, so true a companion as this pure maiden girl, who seemed, in springing up among the flowers, to have caught their beauty and fragrance? No, he felt that he could not. And more, he felt that she welcomed him as a friend, and looked for and expected his coming. He did not think of love; but was attracted toward Lizzy as a sweet, young friend, in whose company he felt peculiar pleasure.

Cameron mentioned to no one the discovery he had made. Daily he took his accustomed walk, and daily turned aside to pass a short time with the gentle young girl, from whose hand, he always received, at parting, some flowers reared, culled and arranged by her own fair self. Gradually, his walks were less extended, and the time passed with Lizzy more prolonged. He brought her books, which she eagerly read, for the sake of him who brought them. Her advantages had been few, but her mind was clear and strong, as her heart was guileless and loving. These books, and the conversation of the young man, gave her a clearer idea than she had yet had of her own deficiencies, and filled her with a desire for knowledge, in order that she might not be altogether inferior to one whose mind was so richly stored, and who had turned from all others, to pass many hours with her in her humble seclusion.

The mother of Lizzy, who, instead of getting better, continued gradually to grow worse, was by no means well satisfied with the daily visits of the young student. She had lived longer, had seen more of the world, and was wiser than her daughter. She knew that the latter had enjoyed but few advantages, and that she could not, therefore, be such a one as a highly educated man—as she naturally enough supposed men to be who graduated at colleges—would choose as his wife. Not being able to leave her chamber and come down stairs, Mrs. Lawson had no opportunity to meet Cameron, and judge for herself in regard to him. Such a meeting would have robbed her of some of her prejudices, and made her feel much easier in mind than she did. To all her objections, Lizzy never did more than reply, that she could not help the young man's visits; and, as he was very polite and kind, and never acted with the least impropriety, she could not say anything to offend him, nor tell him not to come any more. Against this the mother hardly knew what to object. In her eyes, there was impropriety enough in the young man's coming as he did; but she could not make Lizzy see with her vision.

CHAPTER III.

Not many weeks elapsed, before young Cameron found himself so much enamored with this wild wood flower, that he could not resist the inclination he constantly felt, when in her company, to whisper in her ears words of tenderness and love. He was sincere in this. Lizzy heard in silence, and with deeply felt, but hidden emotion. As for her own heart, it was full of his image. And yet she loved with a trembling consciousness, that all the treasures of affection might be wasted. Cameron often spoke of his sister, and of his home and parents at the South—could she, a humble, uneducated girl, expect to be received by them? The thought troubled her.

Warm summer weather succeeded to the pleasant spring time, and Mrs. Lawson still remained an invalid in her chamber. Although she heard, almost daily, the voice of the young man below, she had not yet looked upon his face.

In August, the collegiate course of Rufus Cameron was to close. To this time, Lizzy looked forward with a shrinking heart. Then her lover would go away—then their almost daily sweet intercourse would cease—and hundreds of miles would interpose their almost impassable barriers between them. How soon would they meet again? Or, would they ever meet again? These were questions asked of her own heart so earnestly sometimes, that the very color would grow pale on her cheeks.

August came, and but a week stood between Lizzy and the long dreaded separation, and yet, though Cameron had talked of love—had told her how dear she was to him—he had never said a word about making her at any time his wife—had never asked her to become his bride—had never said that he would return, some day, and take her back with him to the sunny South.

The fact was, the young man, tenderly and sincerely as he loved Lizzy, could not disguise from himself that she was neither educated nor accomplished to a degree required to make her the companion of his sister, or the acceptable friend of those who moved in the circle where he would move on his return home; and, therefore, often as he had been on the eve of doing so, he had still refrained from committing himself by a direct offer of marriage. And yet his intentions were honorable, for he meant, sooner or later, to claim the hand of the pure-minded girl.

As we have said, but a week remained before the long dreaded day of separation. Cameron had come as usual, and he and Lizzy were seated in their old and much loved place, a little summer house in the garden, over which had clambered a fragrant clematis, or virgin's bower, its white blossoms now filling the air with perfume. The hand of the maiden

rested in that of her lover. She was looking him earnestly in the face, and her eyes were full of tears.

"It will be so long before I see you again. Perhaps never," she had just said.

"We shall meet again very soon, I hope," replied Cameron, his eyes dropping to the ground, and his face becoming thoughtful—"very soon, I hope."

"How soon?" asked Lizzy, all the interest she felt in the question expressing itself in her voice and countenance.

"I cannot tell; but it must be very soon. I should be miserable if this separation were to prove a long one."

"You will write to me?"

"Oh, yes—often, very often. And I shall expect to hear from you almost every day."

"I will answer every letter you send me," said Lizzy, in a subdued, almost humble voice.

"Then I shall hear from you very frequently," and the young man lifted her hand and kissed it tenderly.

"Will you talk about me to the sister you love so much?" asked Lizzy.

"Yes, as I have talked to you of her."

"I am afraid she will not love the picture you draw of me, as much as I love the one you have so often drawn of her."

"Why not, Lizzy?"

"She will not believe that in a humble girl like me there can be anything to love."

"But I will tell her how pure and innocent and lovely you are, and she will believe me. I know she will believe me, and love you for my sake."

A faint sigh heaved gently the bosom of the beautiful girl.

This interview lasted for an hour, and yet nothing more definite than ardent expressions of love fell from the lips of the young man. He said nothing that the maiden's heart could rest upon in hope. He was going away, and had promised to write, and to come back soon, "but how soon, and for what?"

Day after day they continued to meet, even up to the one when their final parting took place. During this last, long conference of love, Cameron, from some cause or other, spoke of his sister's brilliant talents and high accomplishments with warm admiration. While he was doing so, Lizzy felt humbled and almost hopeless in view of her own deficiencies; and she also felt that there existed a disparity between her and Cameron that should not exist between a man and his wife.

At last the moment of separation came, yet nothing of what he intended in regard to Lizzy had passed the lover's lips. They parted, and not a word was uttered which the maiden could interpret into a promise, the fulfilment of which would make her the happiest of women. There was a long, lingering embrace, a kiss pressed ardently upon the sweet lips of the weeping girl, an earnest clasping of hands. Then the lover tore himself away, not daring to trust his voice in a tender "farewell." At the gate which led into the main road, he turned and looked back. Lizzy was in the door. He kissed to her his hand; but she did not return the sign, for her eyes were so blind with tears that she did not perceive it. A few steps further and he might look back in vain. The cottage of Mrs. Lawson was no longer in sight.

CHAPTER IV.

Back, once more, in his luxurious home at the South, and in daily association with his sister and her accomplished young friends, Rufus Cameron could not help drawing comparisons between them and the lovely girl from whom he had so recently parted; nor were these comparisons always satisfactory. The want of culture in Lizzy was more clearly apparent than ever. He saw, he felt, that, though pure and lovely as a mountain flower, she was yet inferior to those into whose company he was now thrown.

At first, the young man had sought the humble abode of Lizzy Lawson, because enamored of her singular beauty and the native grace and sweetness that surrounded her like an atmosphere. He thought of nothing beyond the pleasure of being in her company. As time passed on, and he continued his almost daily visits, it could not be concealed from him that he had, without intending it, won the maiden's heart. Honorable in his feelings, this discovery did not give him a great degree of pleasure; for he saw that it would require a sacrifice on his part, or produce unhappiness in the mind of the fond young girl. The result was one that he might have expected; but he was young and thoughtless, and before he knew what he was about, had drawn forth her affections. After that, he continued his visits, and, in his undecided state of mind, committed the still greater error of meeting her warm, though delicately expressed feelings, with an open manifestation of his own. It was not long before he felt and talked of love; and from that period, up to the time of their separation, they were lovers. But, as has been seen, he never spoke of what were his ultimate intentions. He never talked of marriage. Frequently he had been on the point of doing so, when a thought of the disparity between her and his sister, and those into whose company he must introduce her, caused him to hesitate and still delay what he felt must in justice be done to Lizzy, whose every affection was now his own. And he continued to hesitate, up to the hour of their separation, and parted from her, without uttering the words she so much desired to hear.

Immediately upon reaching home, Cameron wrote back to Lizzy a long and tender letter, in which he told her truly how great a void in his heart the separation from her had produced. In that letter he said more to give her mind something definite to rest upon than he had ever before done. It occurred in a passage which we will here give.

"How soon I will be able to return to you, I cannot now tell. I trust the time of separation may be brief, and that we will soon meet again, even if it be for a short space only. Having completed my college course, I must now devote a year at least, perhaps a longer time, to the study of law, before I can be admitted to the bar, and settle myself down for life. When this occurs, I fondly trust that all things will favor the hopes I have long entertained in regard to you, but dared not trust myself to speak."

This passage was read over and over again by Lizzy. The last sentence was transcribed upon her heart, and made its pulsations lighter. In writing back, she referred to it delicately, yet so pointedly that Cameron clearly saw she had understood him. By the time her answer came, he had been making the contrast already referred to, and he half repented having said anything that could be understood as a promise of marriage. The effect, however, was to make him resolve, that he would be true to the love she bore him, at any sacrifice.

The reader can easily see that the mind of the young man must sustain a severe conflict, and it did. What the result was, our narrative will show. About two months after his return to the South, he received, in one of Lizzy's letters, the intelligence that her mother had died. This he knew left her perfectly alone. Her mother was her only near relative. Nothing was said of what she intended to do; the letter only announced the affliction she had sustained. In a subsequent letter she mentioned that she had sold the little homestead, which had been left to her, and was, at the time, residing in Hartford, in the family of an old friend of her father's, where she expected to remain.

After this, there was a marked improvement in the tone and style of the letters which were received from Lizzy by Cameron. There was a deeper tone of feeling expressed, though in much fewer words, and in clearer language than she had before used; and there was a maturity of thought and an evidence of reading and observation unobtrusively apparent She only wrote in reply to his letters. If the intervals were long in which he wrote to her, he heard from her at long intervals; if the intervals were short, he heard from her frequently. Thus the time passed on, until a year elapsed from the day of their parting, without a return of Cameron to the North, although he often spoke of making the intended visit. Then his letters came less frequently, were colder, and more formal. This Lizzy could not bear. There was an evidence of waning affection on his part, while her love had grown warmer and stronger. She did not conceal what she thought and felt, in writing, but plainly asked if what she feared were true. A month elapsed and then an answer came—a long, very long answer, in which the young man reviewed the whole history of their acquaintance, and the subsequent intimacy of a tender character that had existed between them. The conclusion was as follows:

"I have long felt, and am now painfully convinced, that a marriage between us cannot be a happy one, because of the difference in our education, habits of life, and associations. If you had possessed the advantages of those who move in the circle where I move, I know you would far outshine them all. But these you have never had. Such advantages, alas! were denied you in early life. If I were to bring you into the circle where I must move, it would not make you happy, and would subject me to constant irritations. Painful as it is to say what I am now saying, I am constrained to do it both for your own sake and mine. Hard as the task will be for both of us, let us try to forget each other. Let us be as strangers. It will be better in the end."

No answer was ever received by Cameron to this cruel letter. It was written about a year and a half after he left college. By this time, he had mingled a good deal in society, and was rather more a man of the world than he was when he first fell in love with Lizzy Lawson. That was a boyish folly, of which he had seen reason to repent. The silence with which his last letter had been received, troubled him for a long time. It left him perfectly ignorant of the effect produced. Had Lizzy written him warmly and indignantly in reply, and upbraided him for the wrong he had done to her, he would have been greatly relieved. This he could have borne cheerfully, as well deserved. But to know nothing of her state, left his mind free to imagine the worst consequences.

Nearly three years elapsed, without any, even the least, information about Lizzy reaching the ears of Cameron, who thought of her much oftener than was pleasant to his feelings. At the end of this time, he was married to the daughter of a Southern planter, who was not possessed of much beauty, nor was she very brilliantly endowed by nature. She had undergone a system of hot bed mental culture at a young ladies' seminary, and was accomplished up to the fashionable line beyond which few pass. Her father was a man of wealth, and the family to which she belonged, one of standing in the South. Altogether, she was considered an unexceptionable match for him, and the union gave great satisfaction both to his own and the relatives and friends of the young lady.

Lizzy Lawson, when she received the letter from Cameron that at once blasted all the hopes she had so long entertained of a union with him, was stricken almost to the earth for a time. But she, too, had grown older since the day of her parting with the young student, and her character had also gained strength She was not what she was, when, like one of her own modest flowers, she gently expanded in the quiet seclusion of her mother's cottage. She had seen, and thought, and felt more; and was now a woman. If bound to the earth for a time, she had the strength to lift herself up, and she exerted that strength; though she suffered—deeply suffered. The image of her lover had been so firmly impressed upon her heart, that it could not be at once, nor easily obliterated. But she covered it over and shut it out from her eyes resolutely. Not always did she succeed in hiding it; but when the covering was, from any cause, removed, she restored it as quickly as possible. As time wore on, it became dimmer and dimmer, and at last became so indistinct as to be scarcely perceived, except when some mementos of the past breathed refreshingly upon it.

CHAPTER V.

After the marriage of Cameron, an excursion of a few weeks was taken, and the party proceeded as far North as Washington City. On its return, several days were spent at Charleston with relatives and friends, and two or three brilliant parties were given to the bride. At the first of these gay assemblages, as Cameron sat conversing with a friend, a young gentleman, the son of a distinguished member of the

highest branch of the National Legislature came up and said, addressing the friend of Cameron—

"Have you seen Miss Lawson?"

"No," was replied. "I have looked for her, but imagine she is not present."

"She received an invitation, I know. The Misses P—— are present."

"She ought to be here, then."

"Yes; I don't see how we are to do without her."

The young man was then introduced to Cameron. After conversing a short time, he turned away, saying as he did so—

"I must look again. She certainly must be here. There is Lucy P——. I will ask her."

"Who is this Miss Lawson?" inquired Cameron, as the young man walked away.

"A young lady who has been in our city about six months."

"She must be something of a belle."

"She is, although but a teacher in Gen. P——'s family. The general was making a tour at the North last summer, when his daughters fell in somewhere, with this Miss Lawson, who is a girl of brilliant accomplishments and great beauty; besides being a perfect lady. After much earnest persuasion, seconded by most liberal offers as to compensation, they induced her to return with them to the South, and undertake the education of their younger sisters, as well as give them instructions in music, French and Italian. She was engaged in teaching at the North, that being her only means of support. I believe she has no near relatives. The daughters of Gen. P——, with whom she is more like an older sister and loving companion than one who merely holds the place of an instructor, are much attached to her. She was at once introduced by them into the best society here, and is respected, admired, and beloved by all. She is, indeed, a brilliant woman. I hardly think the young ladies, who prevailed upon her to come South, will enjoy the advantages they now possess very long, for my young friend who has just left us is deeply in love with her, and I look every day to hear their engagement announced."

"He belongs to one of the best families at the South."

"Yes; and Henry L—— will prove an honorable representative of that family."

"You say this Miss Lawson is a woman of superior education and accomplishments?"

"Oh, yes. I have never met with a more interesting person. What heightens the chasm that surrounds her, is a seeming unconsciousness of the power she possesses. She is modest and retiring, yet always yields with a natural grace that wins your heart at once, when an effort is made to draw her from the quiet nook where she is sure to retire if left to herself in company. I more than suspect that she is hidden away in these crowded rooms, somewhere. If so L—— will soon find her out."

"Do you know from what place at the North she came?" asked Cameron.

"I never heard."

The conversation about Miss Lawson was now changed. Cameron's curiosity was considerably excited. The name, and the fact that this beautiful girl, who had won the tribute of affection from all hearts, was from the North, brought vividly before his mind the image of Lizzy Lawson.

"Where is Miss Lawson?" was asked of one of the daughters of Gen. P——, in his presence, some short time after he had first heard her name mentioned.

"We could not persuade her to come," replied the young lady.

"Was she not well?"

"She made no complaint of feeling sick; but appeared dull."

"Did she give any reason for remaining at home?"

"None, except that she did not feel like going into company. We were quite reluctant to leave her behind, but she seemed so earnest in her wish to remain at home, that we did not urge her very strongly to come with us."

The curiosity of Mr. Cameron was a good deal excited by the little he heard about this young lady from the North. On the next day he mentioned her name in the family of the friend at whose house he was staying, and found that she was known to them quite well, and held in high estimation. They spoke of her as possessing remarkable beauty, which was heightened by the sweetness of her temper, and the perfect ease and grace of her manner; a mind highly cultivated; and varied accomplishments.

At the second party given by the bride's friends, Cameron looked for the appearance of Miss Lawson with much interest, and some misgivings of heart. The thought that it was Lizzy, once or twice glanced across his mind; but that was impossible, and he forced it away. But for all this, he felt restless, and anxious to see the one so loved and admired by all.

"Where is Miss Lawson?" he heard asked of one and another, but no one had seen her.

"Is not your friend Miss Lawson here to-night?" said a lady to Anna P——.

"No, ma'am," was answered.

"Why not?"

"She did not wish to come? We urged her very hard, but she said that she did not feel like going into company."

"That's strange. She always seems happy in society, and makes every one happy around her."

"Yes; but she does not appear to be just herself at present. For a week we have noticed that she mingles less with the family; and that her face wears a sober expression."

"I am sorry. I wish you could have persuaded her to come out. It would have done her good."

"So we thought; but she declined attending this and the party at Mrs. O——'s in so earnest a manner, and at the same time, so decidedly, that we could say but little. When we came home from the last party, she asked a good many questions about the bride, and was interested in all we said about her. But she didn't seem to be herself."

Mr. Cameron heard this conversation, and it disturbed him.

"Can this be Lizzy Lawson?" he said, mentally. "But that is impossible," he quickly replied. "She

was good and beautiful, and worthy to be loved by all; but she had few educational advantages; while this person is represented as having a highly cultivated mind. No, it cannot be Lizzy. I must see her before I leave Charleston."

A third and last party was given. Cameron had not yet seen the admired of all admirers, but he had heard of her everywhere, and found that

> "None knew her but to love her,
> Or named her, but to praise."

On the afternoon before this last party, the young lady to whom allusion has been made, sat, alone in her room. Her face was not only sober, but sad in its expression. Evidently she was in deep and somewhat painful thought, and in earnest debate upon some question. Suddenly her room door was opened, and two young ladies came in, saying, as they entered—

"Miss Lawson, you must go to the party to-night."

The sadness instantly fled from the face of the person addressed, and she answered with a gentle smile—

"I shall be happier at home."

"And we shall be happier to have you there; so you mustn't say a word more about staying away. You don't know how much you were missed at the last two parties. Every one was inquiring after you."

"It is pleasant to have so many friends," Miss Lawson said, with some feeling.

"But is it right to deprive them of your company, because you feel more inclined to remain at home than enter into the enjoyments of social intercourse?"

"I don't know that it is, but——"

She paused, and her countenance became sober.

"You are not happy, Miss Lawson," said the elder of the two young ladies, her voice becoming serious; "and you have not been happy for some time. We love you as our sister—may we not, as sisters, ask why a shadow has fallen upon your spirits?"

This was spoken with great tenderness; and it touched the heart of her to whom it was addressed. Her eyes fell to the floor, and she struggled for some time, and hard, with her feelings, before she gained sufficient control over them to trust herself to speak. She then said—

"A shadow has fallen upon my spirit, as you say; but I hope it will pass away soon, and leave all serene as before. It has come with the memory of earlier days."

"Let the light of our love dispel that shadow," was the earnestly spoke reply to this. "Think not of the past, if the thought brings gloom instead of gladness. Be happy in the present. Make an effort to throw off this shadow. Come! Say you will go with us to-night. You will be better for it."

Miss Lawson sat musing for some time. Then she said, as if speaking from a sudden resolution—

"You are right, Anna; I will go."

CHAPTER VI.

Rufus Cameron was sitting by his young bride in the midst of a gay company on the evening of the third and last party that had been given to them in Charleston, when he heard some one say—

"There is Miss Lawson."

He turned quickly, and near him, leaning upon the arm of young L——, was the loveliest creature he had ever beheld. To him she was no stranger. Lizzy Lawson was before him. Body as well as mind had expanded since last he saw her, for now she was slightly taller in stature, and fuller in form. But the innocent sweetness of her face, that had first won his love, still remained, though elevated and purified by heart-trials that, for a time, were difficult to bear; and filled with speaking life by an influx of intelligence into the ultimate forms of expression. She was in earnest conversation with L—— when Cameron's eyes first rested upon her, and there was a beautiful play of thought over her face. The young man was speechless with painful surprise.

In a few moments the companion of Lizzy, said to her—

"Come! I must introduce you to Mr. and Mrs. Cameron, as this is your first attendance on the bridal parties."

And L—— led her foward and presented her to the persons he had named. Cameron was so confused that he could not speak; but Miss Lawson remained perfectly unembarrassed, and bowed and smiled with easy grace to the bride and groom. She could not have been more self-possessed, nor have acted differently, if Rufus Cameron had been a perfect stranger. No one dreamed that they had met before. The young man was half in doubt as to the identity of the maiden. He looked up, wondering, into her face, and met her calm eyes, resting in his own—but there was not the smallest sign of recognition.

When she turned away, leaning upon the arm of her companion, one of the finest looking men in the room, the heart of Cameron was laboring so heavily, that he could distinctly hear its pulsations.

And now her praise was upon every lip, and ringing into his ears from all sides. Even his bride talked of her wonderful beauty, and expressed a wish to meet her less formally to know her better.

As Miss Lawson sung with great taste, and had a voice that combined strength with sweetness, she was soon handed to the piano by some lover of music. Here she warbled a few well chosen songs, filling the rooms with most enchanting melody. It was more than four years since Cameron had heard that bewitching voice. If a momentary doubt as to the identity of the beautiful girl had crossed his mind, it was now dispelled. The voice had changed as little as the face; it was the same voice, but deeper and richer.

Next he saw her moving with unequalled grace in the dance; and next he was thrown directly into her society, and listened for nearly half an hour to a conversation carried on in a little circle that had gathered around him and his bride, in which Lizzy sustained her part in a way that filled him with admiration. During this time, although she often looked into his face, replied to his remarks, and even conversed with him, she never once, by look or tone, betrayed what was in her heart. If this had been their first meeting, she could not have treated him more like a stranger.

On the following day, Cameron returned home with his bride, far less happy than when he pressed upon

her glowing lips at the altar a kiss love. He felt that she was in every way inferior to the woman whose young and innocent heart he had so deeply wronged. Years before he had turned away from one whom he deemed unworthy of a place beside him in the social position he occupied, and now that one was loved, admired and courted by all who knew her, and would, without doubt, soon be lifted to a higher place than even he could have raised her to.

A few months after his meeting with Lizzy, the wife of Cameron received a letter from a friend in Charleston, filled with a description of the splendid parties which had followed the marriage of Mr. L—— to Miss Lawson. This she read aloud to her husband, but she little dreamed of what was in his mind as she lingered over the glowing account, and often paused to express her admiration of the bride. It was well for her happiness that she did not.

As the wife of L——, who has since become one of the most distinguished men of his state, she, who was once humble and uneducated, is now known as one of the most beautiful, intelligent and lovely-minded women in the brilliant circle where she moves; but, beyond her own little neighborhood, the name of Mrs. Cameron is not heard; and within it she is but little admired, and by but few beloved.

The remarkable change in Lizzy Lawson is easily explained. She had felt, deeply, the disparity that existed between her and Cameron, and upon the death of her mother, sold the little homestead that remained to her, for which she received but a few hundred dollars, removed into the city, and, without hinting to her lover what was in her mind, entered, for a regular course of instruction, one of the best seminaries in the place. Love made her mind clear and strong. She acquired the various branches of knowledge, to which she applied herself, with wonderful facility. She said nothing of all this in her letters to Cameron, although he saw that she was improving, because she wished to surprise him when he returned to the North to see her, as he had promised to do.

But he never returned, and his letters at last came less frequent and more cold. Then, at his request, all intercourse ceased; and they were to each other as strangers. Not long after this, the money which Lizzy had obtained by the sale of her little property, was exhausted, and she sought for the means of a livelihood in teaching. Her beauty, intelligence, and goodness of heart, were the means of making her many friends, some of them warm and true; by these she was introduced into a refined and cultivated society, of which she was a bright ornament. Here she was met by the daughters of Gen. P——. The rest is known.

MARGARET CLINTON.

BY MARY DAVENANT.

"What time is it, Margaret?" said Mr. Clinton to his daughter, as he folded a letter he had been writing at a library table on the other side of the room, from that at which his wife and daughter were sitting.

Margaret laid down her book, and taking out her watch, replied—"It is half past eight, papa—time enough, I hope, for me to finish this book that I must return in the morning."

At the next instant Mr. Clinton took out his own watch to seal his letter, and before his daughter could read another page interrupted her again—"Ring the bell, my dear, and tell John to take this letter to the post at once." The bell was just behind Mr. Clinton's chair, and he could have touched it with a slight change in his position. "Now, Maggie," he continued, when the servant was dismissed with the desired directions, "bring in my slippers and find the book I was reading here last evening. It was a volume of Macauley, I think," he added, as his daughter returned with the slippers in her hand, and having assisted him in making the required change in his *chassure*, took down the volume from the book-case, and then resumed the perusal of her own.

"See what is the matter with my knitting, Margaret?" said her mother, a few moments afterward, protruding two large wooden kneedles between the book and her daughter's face. "It has all got wrong again, and I can't for my life tell how."

For about the sixth time that evening Margaret took the knitting from her mother's hands. This time the error was a serious one, and it required both patience and ingenuity to untwist the tangled web Mrs. Clinton had wrought. "I think it must be owing to this blunt needle that I cannot get on," she continued, as Margaret replaced it in her hands—"there is a better one I'm sure in one of the drawers of my dressing-table, or in the bureau, or wardrobe, or somewhere about. Just step up stairs, my dear, and look for it."

"And while you are there, Maggie," said her father, "you can run up to the book-case in the third story entry, and look for the volume of Select Speeches that contains Sheridan's speech on the impeachment of Warren Hastings—I want it to refer to."

Poor Margaret, with a despairing glance at her own interesting book, lighted her candle which was always at hand ready for similar excursions, and after a half hour's rummaging through her father's and mother's repositories, laid both the volume and the needle before them.

"What in the world kept you so long, child?" said Mr. Clinton. "I have got so sleepy that I shall not be able to read a word."

"And this needle is if anything worse than the other," added his wife, despairingly—"where *did* you get it?"

"Far back in one of the wardrobe shelves."

"Well, in one of the bureau drawers, I know there is a better one—see if there is not."

Again Margaret traversed the long entries and stairs, and on her return after her fruitless search, found to her great joy both father and mother asleep in their respective arm-chairs, and incapable, for the present, of issuing any further orders.

My readers may probably suppose that Mr. and Mrs. Clinton were either very old, or infirm, or rheumatic; and that, probably, the only servant in the house had been despatched to the post-office. On the contrary, they were still in their prime, though the parents of a family all married and settled except our heroine, (for she is a heroine who performs almost incredible labors.) At that moment, too, three able-bodied maid servants, all younger than Margaret, were sitting in the comfortable kitchen. But for this part of the community Mrs. Clinton had a most consistent compassion. "She made it a principle," she said, "to spare them as much as possible, poor things"—not by her own efforts which would have been fair enough, but by tasking to the utmost her daughter s powers of endurance, which she seemed to think were infinite.

It was now nearly ten o'clock, and Margaret was again deeply absorbed in her book, when the door bell rang loudly, and a note was placed in her hands, on reading which her brow, hitherto calm and unclouded, assumed a sad and troubled aspect.

"What is that, Margaret?" asked her father, rubbing his eyes.

"Only a line from Caroline, begging I would come to Frank immediately."

"Has the rascal been in another frolic?"

"Yes, and it is cruel in Caroline to send for me. I told her the last time that I could not come again."

"And you would leave that poor, weak nervous creature to manage a drunken man by herself?" said Mrs. Clinton, in astonishment. "I cannot believe it of you, Margaret—you must go to her."

"I cannot, mamma," said Margaret, firmly—"you do not know what I would have to go through there."

"Poor, dear Carry has to go through it—you never think of her."

"He is her husband, not mine. She has servants, and if she wants further aid should send for William or Harry, or my father, not for me."

"I would break the drunken rascal's bones for him if I went to him, and so would your brothers as Caroline knows well," said Mr. Clinton, indignantly. "He may kill himself as soon as he pleases with his drink—the sooner the better for me."

"In the meantime he may kill poor Carry, if no one goes to her," said Mrs. Clinton.

"Then go to her yourself, my dear," said her husband, drily.

"I! mercy on me, Mr. Clinton, what are you thinking of? I! with my poor nerves? I! that am more afraid of a drunken man than anything on earth except a crazy one?"

"And Frank is now both," said Margaret, "and as such I cannot encounter him."

"You must, Margaret—you must," said her mother. "I insist upon it—as your mother I command you—don't delay a moment. Take your wrapper, my dear, and John shall go with you. Not a word—not a word, but go at once"—and poor Margaret, the victim of the caprices, the weaknesses, and even the sins of a whole family, was hurried off on her painful mission.

It is a homely but true saying, that "some people come into the world saddled and bridled, while others are born booted and spurred," and Margaret Clinton endowed as she was with a superior judgment, a gentle temper, a more self-sacrificing spirit, and a tenderer conscience than the rest of her family, had the misfortune, through a certain want of firmness, to occupy a place in the first class. On her very entrance into life she had met with a disappointment in her affections that had rendered her indifferent to the enjoyments the young and lovely are wont to derive from social amusements and the admiration of the world. Her attachment to one in every way worthy of her love, but whom her proud and wealthy family chose to consider her inferior, had been thwarted on most frivolous pretences, and Margaret had been forced to sacrifice the strongest feelings of her heart to her convictions of filial duty. She had resisted a subsequent effort of her parents to force upon her an alliance more acceptable to them, and her gratitude for their relinquishing their wishes in that case, had rendered her, if possible, more self-denying, more devoted to their slightest whims and wishes in all others.

Two younger sisters had grown up under her fostering care. Her own happiness was gone, but she gave up both body and mind to the promotion of theirs. They had married, one with the consent, the other in direct defiance of her parents—both the consent won and the opposition softened through the gentle influence of Margaret. The choice of Caroline, the younger, had been particularly unfortunate. Her family were well aware of the dissipated habits of the remarkably handsome man she had determined to marry, and opposed it with all their might. But Caroline's will was stronger than theirs; she resisted the commands of her parents, the counsels of her brothers, her sister's tears and entreaties, and concerted an elopement which fortunately was detected. As it was found that Caroline, though once prevented, would persist in her design; her father, to avoid this scandal, had the unworthy couple united in his presence, and then declared that he would disown them entirely. Through Margaret's influence Mr. Clinton had not carried this into effect; and Caroline, ever her mother's favorite, had continued apparently in the same favor with her parents as before her disobedience. She had now been four years married; was the mother of three children; and as such the constant object of Mrs. Clinton's solicitude.

For the first year or two Caroline had concealed as much as possible her husband's derelictions from her family; but on one occasion Margaret having been present, she exercised so judicious a control over the drunken man, that from that time her aid had been constantly invoked, and but seldom in vain. Time and again had she left her comfortable home to confront the ravings of her brother-in-law, to calm the hysterical weakness of her sister, and to keep, as best she might, the helpless children from becoming the victims of their imbruted father. But the task was a revolting one, the contact with vice was too disgusting, and the unhappiness to herself that resulted from it, first lead her to question how far the system of self-sacrifice she was constantly pursuing had promoted the true interests of those around her.

"As far as I can see it my life has been one grand mistake," was the result of her mental communing; "I destroyed the happiness of the only man I loved by yielding at once to an opposition that time would have overcome; and he married a woman who makes him wretched. To stifle my own misery I then devoted my life to others; I have covered their weaknesses when I should have combatted them; made my sisters indolent, my brothers selfish, and my parents exacting and unreasonable. And to do this I have crushed all the high aspirings of my own nature, forborne to cultivate my talents, and almost starved my soul, thus injuring myself and them. For the future I wish to act differently—my parents I will serve on my very knees, but the rest of my family may learn to do without me."

Such were Margaret's secret resolves, but what had been their results? It so chanced the first opportunity of testing them was with her eldest sister, Mrs. Walsingham, a complete woman of pleasure, whose four spoilt children were often in the way, and then were always turned over to Margaret.

"We are to have a large dinner to-morrow, Margaret, and I will send the children early in the morning to spend the day with you. Your Sarah can look after them; as Jane is such a handy creature when we have company that I can't spare her."

"I shall be engaged in the morning," replied Margaret, "and am afraid I shall not be able to see after the children—besides, without me they disturb my mother sadly."

"Nonsense," said Mrs. Walsingham, "they will do her good. You spoil mamma, Margaret—she is better able to bear the noise of the children than I, who have a headache half the time. Our party will be very pleasant, and I want to keep as quiet as I can beforehand that I may enjoy it."

Her sister made some further opposition, which was overruled, and the children sent as usual on such occasions. Not a word was said about Margaret's joining the pleasant party, but a week afterward Mrs. Walsingham appeared at her father's with—

"Margaret you must come to tea to-night; there are some stupid relations of Mr. Walsingham's in town that we must have, and I want you to help me out."

Margaret declined, pleading occupation; and Mrs. Walsingham replied—"What has got into you, Margaret?—you have grown so disobliging. I should like to know what you have to do? If you had a house and husband and four children to look after you might talk of being busy."

Margaret smiled and shook her head; while Mrs. Clinton made some observation about her being very unsisterly not to be willing to help poor Julia, and finally insisted so strongly on her going that Margaret gave a conditional consent.

"If you will come here to-morrow with the Kanises I will go to you."

Mrs. Walsingham laughed out right.

"I meet those forlornities?—that cross, old porcupine and her stupid daughter? No, no, Margaret, I should quarrel with both if I did come, for I never could endure either of them."

"They are poor and neglected; it is one of the few pleasures of their lives to come here, and mamma and I endure them frequently.".

"Yes, my dear," said the sister, as she rose and adjusted her rich cachemere before a mirror; "you have a taste for sacrifices which I never possessed. So you must come and help me with my forlornities, while I leave you the full enjoyment of yours."

"A taste for sacrifices," thought Margaret, after the door closed behind her sister, and she was forced to listen to a long tirade from her mother about being "so unkind and disobliging." "It is a strange taste enough; but strange as it is, I must really have it, for I find it far easier to make a sacrifice quietly, than to struggle against it and be obliged to yield at last."

So after a few more struggles, Margaret gave up the effort as useless.

It was some eighteen months from the time we have spoken of, when Mrs. Walsingham might one morning have been seen hurrying down the street toward the house of her eldest brother, at a pace very different from the slow and matured tread usual to that fashionable lady. Her face too looked flushed and agitated; and it was evident something had occurred to disturb her equanimity.

"Are you engaged, William?" she asked, as she put her head inside the office-door, and saw her brother busy writing.

"Come in, Julia," he replied; "more of the old story, I suppose. Caroline left me but half an hour ago in no pleasant humor, and I see you have come in much the same frame of mind. I believe a bomb shell might have burst in the midst of us without causing half the commotion our quiet Margaret has occasioned, by doing as most women do when they have a good chance."

"And you encourage and uphold her in taking this foolish step, and have really persuaded my father to consent to it?"

"I have actually been guilty of that unpardonable sin. I promised Mr. Gordon my influence some time ago, and now hope to atone in some degree for the wicked part I before took against him, foolish boy that I then was. Margaret too has opened her heart to me, and irreparable as is her loss to us all, I advise her to marry the man who has always possessed her affection."

"Always! William, what are you insinuating when the man has had a wife in the meantime? And this, I suppose, is an excuse for his addressing her with such improper haste; his poor wife scarcely cold in her grave—a pretty state of things indeed!" said Julia, indignantly. "Bring the case home to yourself—what would you think if it were my husband who was acting so?"

"If you were such a wife as Mrs. Gordon, I should think a year quite long enough to mourn you; she was a miserable, ill-tempered, silly woman, who it is notorious gained her husband by manœuvering, and then tormented him to the utmost. Besides Margaret will not marry for another year, so the *convenances* will be strictly observed."

"But it is such gross folly in her to leave her comfortable home, where she has nothing to do but to please herself, and undertake the charge of three children—at her age, too, when habits are fixed and hard to change. Ah! she will bitterly repent it," said Mrs. Walsingham, with an accent that betokened she hoped it would turn out so.

"Julia," said her brother, smiling, "it will surely be easier to take care of her own husband and children, than of all the husbands and wives and children in our family, as she has done for the last ten years. When was there sickness, or trouble, or any domestic discomfort in any of our households, that we have not turned to Margaret for our most efficient help?—and yet you say that pleasing herself is the sole business of her life."

"But what will papa and mamma do?—she has spoiled them both so entirely that they are incapable now of taking care of themselves."

"Another instance of her selfishness, I suppose," said Mr. Clinton. "But happily they are as unconscious as yourself of their entire dependance on Margaret, and the sooner they and all the rest of us awake from it the better."

"I am sure she never did so much for me," said Mrs. Walsingham.

"Nor for Caroline, nor Harry's wife, nor my own Mary either, I suppose?"

"They have been rather *exigeante*, I allow."

"And they allow the same with regard to you—so all of us owe Margaret a hitherto unacknowledged debt, which we must now repay by permitting her to be happy in the way she prefers."

But this was a conclusion Mrs. Walsingham would by no means consent to. Margaret had so long given up all her own preferences, that now the common right of deciding what was best for her own happiness was considered a positive infringement upon the rights of others, and but for the support of her eldest brother she might again have been forced to yield to the clamor raised by her family.

It was but a short time before that Margaret had, by an apparent chance, been thrown with the lover of her early youth, who, within little more than a year, had been set free by the hand of death from a wife he could neither love nor respect. During his unfortunate marriage he had more than once looked

back with anguish upon the happiness his cruel fate seemed to have denied him; and now that he was again free, he determined upon a desperate effort to reverse her stern decree. Though still an inhabitant of the same town, he had scarcely seen Margaret since their bitter parting, and when they again met both were changed. The ardent, impetuous youth had become the earnest, thoughtful, subdued man, on whose broad and intellectual brow sorrow and vexation of spirit had set an impress even stronger than the hand of time. The blooming, beaming, beautiful face of Margaret was now pale and calm—the Hebe had changed into the Madonna—but to Horace Gordon's eyes the Madonna was the lovelier vision, and all the warm tide of his youthful love rushed back upon his heart as he gazed upon it. Margaret felt her own heart thrill beneath the gaze, and the glow that suffused her pale cheek told Horace that calm and passionless as she seemed, a spark of feeling for himself still lingered there, and that spark he soon found opportunity to fan into a flame, bright and pure as had glowed in her youthful bosom.

But amidst her new found happiness to whom could she turn for sympathy?—to none. In her joy as in her sorrow Margaret Clinton was alone. She whose ear and heart had ever been open to others, felt that theirs would now be closed to her—that ridicule and remonstrance were all that she would meet with when she gave them her confidence, and the event proved that she judged them rightly.

There is nothing harder to overcome than an unfounded prejudice, and this the whole Clinton family had cherished against Horace Gordon. It had been taken up in his youth when they considered his addressing Margaret an unwarrantable presumption; and now in his maturity when his worth and talents had won him the respect of all beside, they presisted in the same assertion, and not all the reasonings of her eldest brother, nor Margaret's own gentle pleadings could persuade them to view the matter in a different light. Had they based their opposition on the ground of the loss she would be to them, the flattering unction might have been some balm to the wounds that they inflicted; but Margaret had not the satisfaction of having a single acknowledgment of past sacrifices amid the terrifying toil of those in store for her as a wife and stepmother.

Still Margaret stood firm. Her parents had consented, reluctantly enough it must be owned; and as her engagement was to last a year, she hoped in the course of it to soften opposition, and to render her presence less necessary to those around her. But until her very wedding day things continued in the same strain. Her parents were as helpless, her family as exacting as before. Caroline's husband was more troublesome than ever; and Julia, and Fanny, and Mary had always some domestic comforts or discomforts that she was expected either to provide or to alleviate, so that few and far between were the hours in which she could enjoy her lover's society, or devote herself to gaining the affections of the little family of which she was so soon to assume the control.

"Poor Margaret! how she will miss all the quietness and comfort she has enjoyed here," was Mrs. Clinton's moan, after the collation which followed the ceremony was over, the company dispersed, and the bride and bridegroom had departed on their bridal tour.

"Such an easy life as she has led with nothing in the world to trouble her," sighed Caroline, who thought the only trial of humanity was a drunken husband.

"She will know now what trouble really is," said Julia, "with three children to look after. Margaret has taken a most foolish step—but she will soon repent it, poor thing," and the changes were so rung upon the trials Margaret had in store, that Mrs. Clinton really wept over her daughter's imaginary sorrows before the trio separated.

From this time Margaret took her place beside her sisters in her mother's compassionate regards. For the difficulties of married life she had the most intense commisseration; but that a single woman should ever be either fatigued or annoyed never seemed to enter her mind. A house, a husband and children were the great cares of life; and now that Margaret was surrounded by all, she was amused by the sudden awakening of her mother's anxiety in her behalf.

It was rather a warm morning, some two years after Margaret's marriage, when she and her husband who had been paying some other visits, stopped as usual to see her parents, whose domestic circle was increased by the addition of Caroline, now a widow, and with her four children, an inmate of her father's house.

"My dear Margaret," exclaimed her mother, "how hot and tired you look!—sit here in this cool place, and put this footstool under your feet. Take off your bonnet and mantilla," she added, assisting her to remove them. "Stay, my love, you must have a fan—there were two here a little while ago, but some of the children must have taken them up stairs—wait a moment and I will bring you one," and unheeding Margaret's remonstrances, Mrs. Clinton ran up stairs with the activity of a girl; and during the whole of the visit she bustled about waiting upon her daughter as though she were a princess.

As they walked toward their home, Margaret observed to her husband—"Time's changes are most wonderful!—who would have thought a few years ago that mamma would ever be so young and active?"

"Circumstances change us even more than time," was his reply; "your marriage, Margaret, has been a real blessing to your family. Look how they have all improved since you left them to their own resources. Julia has become quite domestic and industrious. Fanny and Mary can sew, and shop, and nurse their children themselves. Your father can butter his own muffins, and put on his own slippers; and your mother's energies are now kept in constant exercise by Caroline and her children, and her faculties have developed accordingly."

"True," said Margaret. "Caroline, the other day, was giving me an instance of it, and says she has invented a new system of monemonics. Mamma has always been in the habit of leaving her spectacles, and keys, and knitting about, and I used to waste many an hour in wandering through the house in search of them. Now, when she has lost anything,

Carry proposed to ring the bell and send a servant in search of them. Mamma, who never could bear that, always says she will go herself, which Caroline lets her do. It is wonderful, she says, how her memory is improved by this exercise. But it is very selfish in Carry."

"There is but one member of your father's family who is not selfish," said Mr. Gordon, as they entered their own house, and a troup of noisy children came rushing to meet them, almost tearing Margaret's delicate dress to pieces with their boisterous affection. "And she," he added, after listening for a moment to the various demands his children were making upon her, "it is very evident was born to be imposed on."

"Ah, Horace," said his wife, as she placed her hand in his and pressed the golden ringlets of his youngest darling to her heart—"it is sweet to be imposed on by those we love."

"Spoken like a true woman!" exclaimed Horace, laughing—"spoken like a true woman!"

THE MAIDEN'S CHOICE.

BY KATE SUTHERLAND.

KATE DARLINGTON was a belle and a beauty; and had, as might be supposed, not a few admirers. Some were attracted by her person; some by her winning manners, and not a few by the wealth of her family. But though sweet Kate was both a belle and a beauty, she was a shrewd, clear seeing girl, and had far more penetration into character than belles and beauties are generally thought to possess. For the whole tribe of American dandies, with their disfiguring moustaches and imperials, she had a most hearty contempt. Hair never made up, with her, for the lack of brains.

But, as she was an heiress in expectancy, and moved in the most fashionable society, and was, with all, a gay and sprightly girl, Kate, as a natural consequence, drew around her the gilded moths of society, not a few of whom got their wings scorched, on approaching too near.

Many aspired to be lovers, and some, more ardent than the rest, boldly pressed forward and claimed her hand. But Kate did not believe in the doctrine that love begets love in all cases. Were this so, it was clear that she would have to love half a dozen, for at least that number came kneeling to her with their hearts in their hands.

Mr. Darlington was a merchant. Among his clerks was the son of an old friend, who, in dying some years before, had earnestly solicited him to have some care over the lad, who at his death, would become friendless. In accordance with this last request, Mr. Darlington took the boy into his counting-room; and, in order that he might, with more fidelity, redeem his promise to the dying father, also received him into his family.

Edwin Lee proved himself not ungrateful for the kindness. In a few years he became one of Mr. Darlington's most active, trustworthy and intelligent clerks; while his kind, modest, gentlemanly deportment at home, won the favor and confidence of all the family. With Edwin, Kate grew up as with a brother. Their intercourse was of the most frank and confiding character.

But there came, at last, a change. Kate, from a graceful, sweet-tempered, affectionate girl, stepped forth almost in a day, it seemed to Edwin, a full grown, lovely woman, into whose eyes he could not look as steadily as before, and on whose beautiful face he could no longer gaze with the calmness of feeling he had until now enjoyed.

For awhile, Edwin could not understand the reason of this change. Kate was the same to him; and yet not the same. There was no distance—no reserve on her part; and yet, when he came into her presence, he felt his heart beat more quickly; and when she looked him steadily in the face, his eyes would droop, involuntarily, beneath her gaze.

Suddenly, Edwin awoke to a full realization of the fact that Kate was to him more than a gentle friend or a sweet sister. From that moment, he became reserved in his intercourse with her; and, after a short time, firmly made up his mind that it was his duty to retire from the family of his benefactor. The thought of endeavoring to win the heart of the beautiful girl, whom he had always loved as a sister, and now almost worshipped, was not for a moment entertained. To him there would have been so much of ingratitude in this, and so much that involved a base violation of Mr. Darlington's confidence, that he would have suffered anything rather than be guilty of such an act.

But, he could not leave the home where he had been so kindly regarded for years, without offering some reason that would be satisfactory. The true reason, he could not, of course, give. After looking at the subject in various lights, and debating it for a long time, Edwin could see no way in which he could withdraw from the family of Mr. Darlington, without betraying his secret, unless he were to leave the city at the same time. He, therefore, sought and obtained the situation of super-cargo in a vessel loading for Valparaiso.

When Edwin announced this fact to Mr. Darlington, the merchant was greatly surprised, and appeared hurt that the young man should take such a step without a word of consultation with him. Edwin tried to to explain; but, as he had to conceal the real truth, his explanation rather tended to make things appear worse than better.

Kate heard the announcement with no less surprise than her father. The thing was so sudden, so unlooked for, and, moreover, so uncalled for, that she could not understand it. In order to take away any pecuniary reason for the step he was about to take, Mr. Darlington, after holding a long conversation with Edwin, made him offers far more advantageous than his proposed expedition could be to him, viewed in any light. But he made them in vain. Edwin acknowledged the kindness, in the warmest terms, but remained firm in his purpose to sail with the vessel.

"Why will you go away and leave us, Edwin?" said Kate, one evening when they happened to be alone, about two weeks before his expected departure. "I do think it very strange!"

Edwin had avoided, as much as possible, being alone with Kate, a fact which the observant maiden had not failed to notice. Their being alone now was from accident rather than design on his part.

"I think it right for me to go, Kate," the young man replied, as calmly as it was possible for him to speak under the circumstances. "And when I think it right to do a thing, I never hesitate or look back."

"You have a reason for going, of course. Why then not tell it frankly? Are we not all your friends?"

Edwin was silent, and his eyes rested upon the floor, while a deeper flush than usual was upon his face. Kate looked at him fixedly. Suddenly a new thought flashed through her mind, and the color on her own cheeks grew warmer. Her voice from that moment was lower and more tender; and her eyes, as she conversed with the young man, were never a moment from his face. As for him, his embarrassment in her presence was never more complete, and he betrayed the secret that was in his heart even while he felt the most earnest to conceal it. Conscious of this, he excused himself and retired as soon as it was possible to do so.

Kate sat thoughtful for some time after he had left. Then rising up, she went with a firm step to her father's room.

"I have found out," she said, speaking with great self composure, "the reason why Edwin persists in going away."

"Ah! What is the reason, Kate? I would give much to know."

"He is in love," replied Kate, promptly.

"In love! How do you know that?"

"I made the discovery to-night."

"Love should keep him at home, not drive him away," said Mr. Darlington.

"But he loves hopelessly," returned the maiden. "He is poor, and the object of his regard belongs to a wealthy family."

"And her friends will have nothing to do with him."

"I am not so sure of that. But he formed an acquaintance with the young lady under circumstances that would make it mean, in his eyes, to urge any claims upon her regard."

"Then honor as well as love takes him away."

"Honor in fact; not love. Love would make him stay," replied the maiden with a sparkling eye, and something of proud elevation in the tones of her voice.

A faint suspicion of the truth now came stealing on the mind of Mr. Darlington.

"Does the lady know of his preference for her?" he asked.

"Not through any word or act of his, designed to communicate a knowledge of the fact," replied Kate, her eyes falling under the earnest look bent upon her by Mr. Darlington.

"Has he made you his confidante?"

"No, sir. I doubt if the secret has ever passed his lips." Kate's face was beginning to crimson, but she drove back the tell-tale blood with a strong effort of the will.

"Then how came you possessed of it?" inquired the father.

The blood came back to her face with a rush, and she bent her head so that her dark glossy curls fell over and partly concealed it. In a moment or two she had regained her self-possession, and looking up, she answered.

"Secrets like this do not always need oral or written language to make them known. Enough, father, that I have discovered the fact that his heart is deeply imbued with a passion for one who knows well his virtues—his pure, true heart—his manly sense of honor; with a passion for one who has looked upon him till now as a brother, but who henceforth must regard him with a different and higher feeling."

Kate's voice trembled. As she uttered the last few words, she lost control of herself, and bent forward and hid her face upon her father's arm.

Mr. Darlington, as might well be supposed, was taken altogether by surprise at so unexpected an announcement. The language used by his daughter needed no interpretation. She was the maiden beloved by his clerk.

"Kate," said he, after a moment or two of hurried reflection, "this is a very serious matter. Edwin is only a poor clerk, and you —— "

"And I"—said Kate, rising up, and taking the words from her father—"and I am the daughter of a man who can appreciate what is excellent in even those who are humblest in the eyes of the world. Father, is not Edwin far superior to the artificial men who flutter around every young lady who now makes her appearance in the circle where we move? Knowing him as you do, I am sure you will say yes."

"But, Kate —— "

"Father, don't let us argue this point. Do you want Edwin to go away?" And the young girl laid her hand upon her parent, and looked him in the face with unresisting affection.

"No, dear; I certainly don't wish him to go."

"Nor do I," returned the maiden, as she leaned forward again, and laid her face upon his arm. In a little while she arose, and, with her countenance turned partly away, said—

"Tell him not to go, father —— "

And with these words she retired from the room.

On the next evening, as Edwin was sitting alone in one of the drawing-rooms, thinking on the long night of absence that awaited him, Mr. Darlington came in, accompanied by Kate. They seated themselves near the young man, who showed some sense of embarrassment. There was no suspense, however, for Mr. Darlington said—

"Edwin, we none of us wish you to go away. You know that I have urged every consideration in my power, and now I have consented to unite with Kate in renewing a request for you to remain. Up to this time, you have declined giving a satisfactory reason for your sudden resolution to leave; but a reason is due to us—to me in particular—and I now most earnestly conjure you to give it."

The young man at this became greatly agitated, but did not venture to make a reply.

"You are still silent on the subject," said Mr. Darlington.

"He will not go, father," said Kate, in a tender, appealing voice. "I know he will not go. We cannot let him go. Kinder friends he will not find anywhere than he has here. And we shall miss him from our home circle. There will be a vacant place at our board. Will you be happier away, Edwin?"

The last sentence was uttered in a tone of sisterly affection.

"Happier!" exclaimed the young man, thrown off his guard. "Happier! I shall be wretched while away."

"Then why go?" returned Kate, tenderly.

At this stage of affairs, Mr. Darlington got up, and retired; and we think we had as well retire with the reader.

The good ship "Leonora" sailed in about ten days. She had a supercargo on board; but his name was not Edwin Lee.

Fashionable people were greatly surprised when the beautiful Kate Darlington married her father's clerk; and moustached dandies curled their lip, but it mattered not to Kate. She had married a man in whose worth, affection, and manliness of character, she could repose a rational confidence. If not a fashionable, she was a happy wife.

MABEL DELAFIELD.

BY MRS. S. J. HOWE.

"WHY are you so sad, dear Mabel?"

"I feel as if this were the last evening we should ever spend together. Harry, a long, long time must elapse before we meet again.

"Pshaw!" said Mr. Delafield: "you are so desponding it is enough to discourage me, Mabel—a wife should always encourage her husband by a cheerful spirit."

"I would like to do so, dear Harry," and she laid one arm timidly around his neck, and looked earnestly in his face, "but indeed I cannot be cheerful to-night—my heart will have its way—I cannot control it. A sad and fearful presentiment tells me we shall part to-morrow forever."

"Presentiment! What folly."

"It may be folly, but if I loved you less the presentiment would not have fixed itself in my heart"

"Have done with this nonsense, Mabel—I cannot endure it—you have given me the vapors already," and Mr. Delafield left his seat, and walked with impatient steps backward and forward, muttering to himself about the folly and superstition of women.

Mrs. Delafield remained silent. She knew her husband's temper too well to attempt to disturb him, but her thoughts were sad and bitter. She thought of her apparently happy marriage season five years before—of how ardently her husband seemed to love her then, how careful he was to note her every want, and regard her slightest wish. But he was changed—his manner was cold and reserved—he had closed the sanctuary of his heart against her. When she spoke of it he listened unwillingly, and gave as excuses his many cares and anxieties. She knew that much of this was true, for the riches that were theirs at their union had taken "to themselves wings" and flown away: but she also knew, as only a woman can know, that she was not loved as she had been—as she desired to be loved. Then hope whispered gently that the future was not all dark, that when this burden of care of which he complained so much should have been lifted from his heart, all would again be well.

Delafield was leaning listlessly against the mantelpiece—his eyes fixed on the decaying fire, when his wife rose softly and laid her hand on his arm—

"Forgive me, Harry, if I have been dull and uninteresting. You know I would do anything to make you happy."

An unusual softness stole over the features of Mr. Delafield as he returned his wife's caress, and he said kindly—

"Brighter days may come to us yet, Mabel. Cheer up, and let us hope for the best."

Those few kind words were like the sunlight streaming through some prisoner's bars, carrying glimpses of freedom and hope to his yearning soul Dreams of future happiness stole over the heart of Mabel as she retired to rest that night, and she slept sweetly even though she knew that the coming morrow would part her from the one she loved so fervently. In her dreams she overleaped the months which were to separate them, and in the reunion forgot the past with all its doubts and dreamy fears. What a scene would this fair and beautiful world exhibit if hope were fixed!—if the melody of her voice were no longer heard, and the gleaming of her wings were banished forever!

The morrow came, and with it the dreaded parting—the sad and silent farewell. With high and ardent hopes Delafield started for the West—there he expected to regain the fortune he had lost—to fulfil his dreams of worldly ambition, and be satisfied.

Some weeks passed away, and then came a cold and careless letter to Mabel Delafield, telling of anticipated success, but not one allusion to the past, nor a hope of future happiness with her. He spoke not of returning nor of sending for her—and yet, even while the burning tears were streaming down her cheeks, she hoped on and dreamed of happier days. She "hoped against hope," and persuaded her heart into the belief that care and anxiety were preying on his mind, and for a little while had swallowed up affection—but again it would appear refined and purified by absence and trial.

Faithful to her own love she wrote a long and tender letter in return—she encouraged him to persevere in his business: assured him of her own unwavering affection, and looked joyfully forward to the time when they should be reunited, and forgot all past reverses in their crowning happiness. Months, long and wearisome months, rolled on, and no answer came to her kind and gentle letter. Then Mabel found the truth of those beautiful words, that "hope deferred maketh the heart sick," and she thought that any certainty was better than suspense, and yet at that certainty there was no means of arriving. The reed was broken on which she had leaned, and unfortunately she had never been taught that there was a higher refuge—a home for the weary—a resting place for the broken heart.

A year passed heavily on, and no tidings came to Mrs. Delafield of her husband, and she gave him up as dead. Her heart told her that the grave alone could raise a barrier between her and the husband she had loved so tenderly. But there were those even among her dearest friends who thought very differently—who while they did everything that kindness could dictate for Mabel, hoped that Delafield would never return. Seven years passed away, and with them the dearest

and kindest of Mrs. Delafield's friends, and now she began to look around her for support—that support must be made by her own efforts.

The West offered a broader field for exertion than any other part of the country, and thither she determined to go Her spirit had been chastened and purified by sorrow—the ashes of affection were cold on the altar place of her heart—they could never be again relumed, and in their place a flame had been kindled, pure and holy, indeed, because it was born of the spirit which pervades all things beautiful and good. She had learned to look forward to a rock that can never be broken—to "an inheritance that fadeth not away," but sad and lonely she could not help but feel as she left the home of her happy childhood to seek a new one among strangers. Her life had been spent among those who knew her, and looked upon her faults with kindness—*they* knew that the errors she committed were not prompted by the heart—her faults were only like motes in the sunbeam.

After a comfortable journey, Mabel found herself in the hospitable city of L———, and there first felt how easily wounded is the stranger's heart. But Mabel had a way of stealing quietly into people's hearts before they knew it, and a warm circle of friends was soon formed around her, so that through their influence, and by their aid she opened a school, and soon had the pleasure of seeing it well filled with happy faces. A year passed by, and Mrs. Delafield was comparatively happy in doing her duty, and thereby preserving a good conscience.

One bright and sunny morning one of her favorite pupils brought a visitor, a little girl of seven summers. The child was more than usually beautiful, and Mrs. Delafield, attracted by her appearance, called her to her side. As she took the child's hand, and parted the luxuriant curls from the open brow, her eyes involuntarily wandered to a locket of gold which confined a hair necklace around the child's neck. A paleness like that of death came over her features, and she trembled in every limb, but by a strong effort of will she suppressed the shriek of surprise which arose to her lips, and said calmly as she could to her favorite—"A glass of water, dear Mary, I am quite sick." The water was brought quickly, and putting aside the anxious children who crowded around her, she drew the stranger child toward her, and said kindly—"Allow me to look at your pretty locket."

The child was pleased with the attention, and unclasping it hastily laid it in her hands.

"Can it be possible?" thought Mabel, as she examined it: "this certainly was once my own!"

"Who gave you this locket, my child?" asked Mrs. Delafield, faintly.

"My father—dear, good father," replied the child, in delight.

"What is your name?"

"Mabel Delafield."

"Mabel Delafield!—why that is my name!" and Mabel gasped for breath, but she was determined to go on and solve the mystery if possible.

"How old are you, Mabel?"

"Seven years old in June—and this is June, I declare."

"Have you always lived here?"

"Yes, I was born here."

"And your name is Mabel Delafield!"

"Yes! is it a pretty name?—why do you ask?"

"Why it is strange!" and Mabel tried to speak carelessly, "that you should have my name."

"You will love me now because I am your namesake," said the child, as she put her face close to Mrs. Delafield's, and looked into her eyes earnestly.

There was something in that look that went to Mabel's soul, and reminded her of Delafield as he was wont to look on her in moments of tenderness. She pressed her lips on the forehead of the innocent child, and strove to speak in a steady voice.

"Can you tell me where your father lived before he came to this city?"

"In New York."

Mabel groaned aloud, but, taking up the necklace, she clasped it on the child's neck, and said, scarcely thinking of what she spoke—"And the hair, whose soft, glossy hair is this? Is it your mother's?"

"Oh! no, it is a lady's who lives away in New York—she gave it to papa with this locket!"

"And her name—was what?" demanded Mabel, eagerly.

"Mabel Delafield too—that makes three Mabel Delafields," and the child laughed merrily.

But poor Mabel did not hear the laugh—she only heard the words that had carried conviction of the unwelcome truth to her trusting heart. She had fainted, and a long time elapsed, notwithstanding the kind efforts of friends, before Mabel showed a sign of life. The school was dismissed; and the innocent little Mabel had no idea of the mischief she had unconsciously wrought.

And now, kind reader, let me transport you to a fine looking house in the same good city of ———. In the parlor sits Henry Delafield, intent on reading the morning paper. Near him, in fashionable attire, sits a lady young and beautiful, regarding him with an interest which nothing but love could create.

"Do lay aside that paper, Harry, and go with me: I have been waiting this half hour," said the lady, somewhat impatiently.

"Where was it you wished to go, Emily?" asked Delafield, in an abstracted manner.

"To see this Mrs. Delafield about sending Mabel to school."

"I thought you did send her this morning!"

"Oh! I let her go with Mary Palmer just to see how she'd like it, and told her we'd follow directly. I hear so much of this Mrs. Delafield's school that I think it would be better for us to send Mabel there. By the way, I think, Delafield's getting to be quite a common name."

"So it is. Did you ever hear this lady's christian name?"

"No, I did not. But why do you ask?"

"Mere curiosity—that's all!" and Delafield shuddered inwardly.

"You surely don't think it can be your cousin Mabel, Harry. I do believe I should be jealous of her!"

"What nonsense, Emily. Do you think my cousin would be here and I not know it?"

"Such a thing might be—but I have half a mind to be jealous of her anyhow—you called her name so often in your dreams last night."

"Did I?" asked Delafield, much confused, but then recovering himself, he added, "but it was my own little Mabel I was calling, Emily: and here she comes now," and Mabel came running in out of breath, and exclaiming—

"Oh! papa, I found another Mabel Delafield!"

Both father and mother looked surprised, but summoning his courage, Delafield asked—

"Where did you find this woman, my child?"

"She is the lady that teaches school—I love her so much."

"I told you," said Mrs. Delafield, playfully, "that it might be your cousin Mabel, and I suspect it is—but what brought you home, Mabel the third?"

"Mrs. Delafield was so sick—she fainted—and papa! she thought this locket and hair so beautiful—she took it off my neck and looked at it for a long time."

Delafield was rooted to the spot—the mystery was solved—he knew that his deserted wife was near him—he alone guessed the connection between the fainting fit and the locket. But Delafield had gone too far in crime to permit this to crush him without a struggle, and, gathering up all his effrontery, he professed to believe that the lady in question was his cousin, who, for some inexplicable cause, had not warned him of her arrival.

We are always ready to be led by our own wishes, therefore Emily did not doubt the truth of Delafield, even though she thought it strange that he should evince so much feeling on the subject, but whatever her fears were they were sooned calmed by the caresses of her husband. Life had been but as a summer's day to Emily; no cloud had darkened it, and the one now looming above the horizon might pass on without destroying its brightness Thus thought Delafield as his wife and child sat beside him in unshaken confidence.

"Well," said Emily, "we must call on this cousin of yours, dear Harry, immediately: and why not now?"

"Is Mrs. Delafield papa's cousin?—say, mamma, may I not go too?"

"Be quiet, Mabel," said Delafield, and then turning to Emily: "I must first go myself. Mabel is very proud, and she must have some cause for acting in this way."

"Well! I don't like proud women, and I shall not like her, I am sure."

"Yes, you will," joined in little Mabel, "you can't help but loving her—everybody loves her."

"Sometime to-day," and Delafield rose and took his hat, "I shall call and see her." With a trembling heart, and a conscience that goaded him almost to madness, he left his happy and confiding wife, and walked on, on, he cared not whither: but at last, as if his steps were impelled by some secret form, he found himself in front of Mrs. Delafield's seminary. He ascen ed the steps, and rang the bell with a trembling hand—a servant obeyed the summons, and he asked—"Can I see Mrs. Delafield?"

"She is not well: but walk in, and I will see!"

While waiting for the servant's return the moments were as hours, for he felt that everything dear to him in life depended on this interview. The servant returned and required his name—his agitation was intense as he presented his card, but he observed—"I should have thought of this before."

Mrs. Delafield had, in some measure, regained her composure, and, though still pale and agitated, she was sitting up when the servant brought her the card, as her eyes fell upon the name she had dearly loved, she sprang convulsively to her feet, and exclaimed—"Harry Delafield!" and then ashamed of exposing her feelings to the servant, she sank into her chair, and said—"Ask him to walk up."

"*Here!* to your own room, madam?" inquired the servant.

"Yes, here—he is a relation—a particular friend."

As the servant left the room, she clasped her hands over her face, and said—"The bitterest enemy I ever had. Forsake me not now, my Heavenly Father, but direct me in this trial!" The door opened, but Mabel did not look up—she *felt* that Delafield stood before her as she said—

"Be seated, sir, and tell me the cause of this visit."

"Mabel—I know not—what to say."

"Then why come to disturb my peace? What do you desire?"

"Your forbearance—your forgiveness!"

"My forgiveness you have—my forbearance you do not deserve."

"You have ceased to love me, Mabel."

"Dare *you* upbraid me with not loving you?" and her form towered; her eyes dilated, and she looked on him for the first time—but his eyes refused to meet hers. "Harry Delafield! love is extinguished in my heart forever: but I can have compassion on your innocent child—on the unfortunate woman whom you call your wife. I would not have her suffer the misery—the wretchedness you have made me feel—but *you, you*—what do you not deserve?"

"Have mercy, Mabel—do not destroy their happiness—do not expose me to ruin."

"I know what you would ask, Delafield—you would ask me to bear my wrongs in silence—to bury them in the ashes of my love for the sake of others—that their happiness be not destroyed—but how can this be?—for whom does your wife take me?"

"For my cousin," and his lips quivered in agony.

For a minute Mabel was confounded by his impudence, and contempt sealed her lips, but recovering, she said—

"Let it be so, then—but remember it is for the sake of *them*—not for *your* sake that I withhold you from justice—and *we* must *never meet again!*"

"How can I explain that?"

"In any way you like—I will not contradict you. To your wife and child I will be a friend—to *you* as one dead—and now leave me—I would be alone, and may God forgive you as I do now!"

Overcome by her high-wrought feelings, she sank back in her chair and closed her eyes.

"Mabel! farewell!"

She did not speak: and he passed to the door, as he opened it, he said—"May Heaven bless you, Mabel. Will you not say farewell? One word?"

But Mabel moved not: and he went out thinking how strange it was that she who had once loved him so fondly should have changed so much.

When, after some time, the servant entered the apartment, Mabel was still sitting as Delafield left her, but the spirit had fled forever. She had laid her life as a sacrifice on another's shrine.

It was said that Mrs. Delafield died of disease of the heart, and no one thought of inquiring what produced the disease. Little did the unconscious Emily think as she gazed on that face for the first time, now cold and still in death, of the secret buried in that bosom forever. She dreamed not of the sacrifice made for her and her child. And what were the feelings of Delafield as he gazed on the inanimate form which had so often rested in his own bosom. He thought of her never-tiring kindness—of her patience and gentle forbearance, and above all of the sacrifice she made of her own life. But there was a secret joy stole over his heart as he reflected that "the dead tell no tales"—that his danger was past. A few days more and Mabel Delafield was laid in the cold grave. The secret of her sudden death was wrapped in darkness until all secrets are brought to light, for "then is nothing hid that shall not be revealed."

MODEST MERIT.

BY MARY DAVENANT.

"Depend upon it, my dear, merit, modest merit like yours will not always be overlooked, though it may be so at a ball," was the reply Mrs. Arlington made to a remark of her daughter's, a sweetly, pretty young girl, who with a languid, desponding air was gazing into the fire.

"What is that you are saying, aunt, about modest merit?" said a voice from the opposite end of the room, and a handsome, brilliant looking girl rose from the piano, at which she had been seated, and came forward repeating her question, "what was that you were saying about such an old fashioned article? and who is blessed with it besides my little cousin here, who has enough for a whole ball-room of belles?"

"I was merely comforting her for the want of pleasure she experienced last evening," replied Mrs. Arlington, "by telling her she will not always be so overlooked, and that her merit will sooner or later be acknowledged."

"Not while she is so very modest and shy, my dearest aunt; not all the merit of all the Howards would be appreciated in such a place as a ball-room, with such a superabundant stock of modesty as Ellen has. No, no, you must put your merit in a candlestick and elevate it, and not hide it under a bushel if you want it to shine there, and a little gilding added to it will do the merit no harm. Either gold or brass will do the business, the latter often answers as well or better than the former."

"You have great pleasure in talking in this way I know, Cecelia," said her aunt, "and, as a great belle, I suppose I ought not to controvert what you are saying, but I do not think you have much reason, from your own experience, to advocate such doctrines. Your merit has not been overlooked, and yet we all know it has not been elevated by yourself."

"That is true, aunt, that I have not elevated it myself; but then I have done what is pretty much the same thing in the way of success, I have not allowed myself to be put down: as observation if not experience has taught me, that once submit to that and you are a nobody."

"I never saw any one who wanted to, or at least had the hardihood to try to do so," replied Mrs. Arlington—"your claims, my dear Cecelia, are too well known and acknowledged to attempt treating you as they would my daughter, with no claims to either wealth or fashion."

"But at the same time of the same blood as myself," said Cecelia, stooping down and kissing her cousin, "and quite as pretty and a great deal better than I am, only overstocked with diffidence and a want of confidence in herself. I saw how uncomfortable she was last night; but no persuasions of mine could draw her out of the corner she had ensconced herself in, and I had too much respect for her dignity to ask any of the beaux to be introduced to her."

"I should have died with mortification if you had done so, cousin," said Ellen, her face flushing with indignation. "I was very unhappy I won't deny while sitting, dance after dance, and seeing other girls no better looking, nor better dressed than myself, and that I knew were perfect dunces in their wits, with as many partners as they wanted. And I was angry with myself for being so vexed at it; and like Miss Bremer's poor Petrea Franks, I tried to philosophize upon the folly of the thing with about the same success. But I would rather have been sitting there until now than have had any one dance with me from charity, or have exposed myself to be remarked upon as those Miss Finches' are, one of whom I actually heard asking to be introduced to a gentleman, who, when the request was made to him, declined it with a shocking grimace, and left the ball-room immediately. Now was not that too bad to see one of your own sex do?"

"Shocking indeed," laughed Cecelia, "and aunt here looks as if she thought it a fabrication. But there is a wide difference, my dear little Nelly, between such brazen vulgarity as this, and the dignified, self-respecting composure of manner that I want to see in you. You could no more do as they do than you could be as awkward, ugly, square shouldered, and red-handed as they are. It is their nature to be vulgar to an extreme, and yours to be too refined and sensitive. I do not want you to be pushing, only do not be shrinking—you shake your head as if it were impossible to be otherwise, but I nod mine, and say it must be altered, and when I do so, 'not Jove's nod of old that shook the spears,' as Mrs. Malaprop would say, has more d cision in it."

"That I know from past experience," said her aunt, smiling; "I shall never forget the scene in your old uncle's room, Cecelia, when he pushed over that little meek cousin of yours, who was so patiently and softly rubbing his gouty feet, because you had beaten him at chess; and you insisting upon it he should ask her pardon, when the poor, timid little thing had gathered herself up from the corner where she had rolled, without a word of complaint. Every one was frightened at your boldness; but to their atonishment he did it, though evidently very much provoked. Your decision there certainly gained its end."

"And is a case in point for my argument about modest merit. You know that old uncle, whom every one was afraid to contradict or oppose in any way, who was always to be conqueror in every thing from a game of chess upward; would bear

contradiction quietly from me because I would not submit to his unreasonable whims; and that very scene that all thought would cost me my fortune, doubled it, as the date of the codicil showed, by which he left me so much more than the others; and poor Sally who got the kick, and has been his patient slave for more than a year, was rewarded with but a small legacy. And now look at her and at me—with forty times my merit, greatly more beautiful and accomplished, and I do not know how with many more bushels full of that inward worth that passeth show—look at her, she is working her life out in her country parsonage, shut out from all society but that of her young ones and her clergyman husband; his merit overlooked as well as hers, a mere domestic drudge. While I am sought after and made much of—because I make much of myself."

"Too true," replied Mrs. Arlington, "though I believe your cousin is very happy in her way. Not as happy as you are, for she has not the same buoyant temperment that makes sunshine for yourself and all around you. Her tastes are different—more like my Ellen's here."

"Pardon me, aunt—Ellen is not like Sally in her disposition in any way, but in being very diffident and not thinking enough of herself, two traits that have been fostered by her own dear mother's mistaken notions on female education. As you see, Ellen was mortified at not being attended to last night, ergo, she would like to be a belle, which Sally never would—then she would rather die than have a beau dance from charity with her—while Sally would have thought only of his kindness and not of her own dignity. No—Ellen is of firmer stuff, and when I have her at home with me, see if I do not bring all her shining qualities to light, and make a great belle of her."

"Add to that," said her aunt, "making a match for her with some dashing beau, and I shall say the age of miracles has not passed, for one is as feasible as the other. I am not afraid, however, of trusting her with you, Cecelia, for all you have such a wild way of talking—you always contrived to bewitch people into letting you have your own will from your old uncle downward. I only wonder you have not long ago been tormented into marrying some one of your galaxy of beaux, for if I were a man I would never rest until I had tormented you into having me."

"Thank you, my dear, complimentary aunt," said Cecelia; "and now I must go and dress for a walk with one of my galaxy, as you call those bachelor butterflies that profess to find me so charming, and after all I dare say they think with the old song—

> "'Tis not her sense, for sure in that
> There's nothing more than common;
> And all her wit is only chat
> Like any other woman.'

I humbly put some of their devotion down to the score of my being a fortune, but the most of it I owe to my own assumption of superiority, which it amuses me to play off upon them. I am very sad, ain't I, aunt?—but there is my gentleman in waiting, and I must go."

Well might Mrs. Arlington say that her niece was a bewitching creature. Cecelia was one of those favored individuals upon whom fortune seemed to have lavished all her gifts—a beauty both in form and face, with eyes that sparkled with intelligence, and a conversation at once piquant and sensible. She was a charm in everything she said or did. Whether in a gay and sportive mood she flung the bright sparkles of her wit around her—or whether in a more sober strain she talked with the grave and sedate, it was all done with such grace that young and old alike owned the fascination, and felt the influence. An orphan from her earliest youth, she had never known the loneliness of an orphan's lot, as a mother's love had been supplied by an aunt, who, childless herself, doted on Cecelia with an intensity of love that knew no bounds, and that was fully repaid by her niece in return; that she was not spoiled, utterly ruined by the indulgence she met with, was owing to her having a fund of good sense that nothing could warp, and a temper of uncommon sweetness. At the time we introduce her to our readers she had been on a visit to some of her Southern relations, and, on her way to her home, had stayed some time in Philadelphia, with her aunt, Mrs. Arlington, where as usual her career of belleship had been a brilliant one; and presented a marked contrast to that of her cousin Ellen, who though a beautiful girl, was, from want of confidence in herself, constantly pushed into the back-ground by those far her inferiors in every qualification of mind and manners, and was fast acquiring the horrid name of a *forlornity*, when her more fortunate cousin came to her rescue.

"Ellen," said Cecelia to her, on her return from the walk we left her preparing for, "I have been thinking about you all this morning, even while my handsome beau, Dr. Guest, thought I was listening to his brilliant nothings with the deepest attention."

"Ah, Cecelia," said Ellen, "I think the doctor's brilliant nothings, as you call them, all have a meaning in them, when addressed to you, backed as they are by those insinuating looks he so often gives with them."

"My innocent little cousin," said Cecelia, laughing heartily, "do you think I am to be deceived by the chaff this general flirt offers up as incense to each new divinity? Do you not see him making the same speeches, giving the same looks to one girl after the other, if they chance to be the fashion? No, no, I am not to be satisfied with the *debris* of a heart of ten years flirtation. If he does mean to be in earnest now, he must take the consequences of his previous bad style of manners. But enough of him, and now let me tell you what I mean to do with you."

"That is a very cool way of talking about me, Cecelia," said Ellen, brightly; "I am a mere machine I see in your estimation—so let me know what is to be done to and with me."

"In the first place, you know I presume that your mother has promised that I shall take you home with me, and once there I mean you to be guided by my motives. I shall play Lady Paramount over you, which here I cannot do, as my dear, good aunt, with her old fashioned, over sensitive feelings of modesty, delicacy, etc., is always pulling down in you what I

build up. I shall make a belle of you—see if I do not."

"Thank you," said Ellen, curtesying with mock gravity, "you can work miracles then!"

"You may laugh," said Cecelia, "but I will do it, and as I am going home in a week, you had better begin to make ready."

Helen was not at all sorry to acquiesce in her mother's decision, that she should accompany her cousin to Boston. She had never been from home, and she anticipated with girlish delight the new scenes of pleasure that awaited there. Further than this she did not look, except to laugh heartily at Cecelia's plans for making her a belle, and turning the grub she persisted in thinking herself into the butterfly her cousin wished to make of her. Before they left home, however, Ellen proved that if she was diffident, she was not wanting in penetration in some matters, for to Cecelia's great chagrin, and Ellen's infinite delight, Dr. Guest, the hitherto invincible flirt, proposed to Cecelia in good set terms, and to his deep mortification, consternation, astonishment and horror was refused—the young lady giving as her reasons for so doing, that from his well known flirting character she had not supposed him for an instant to be serious in his attentions to her, and had, therefore, never given him a thought as a lover. A bitter truth which the gentleman had to ponder on, and which it is hoped made him a wiser if not a sadder man in his next wooing.

We must now follow our young friends to Boston and see how the modest merit of the one, and the acknowledged merit of the other sped. So Cecelia coming as she did to her own home, after several months absence, all was delightful, as troops of friends and admirers were there to welcome her back again, and to complain of her long stay. To Ellen it was also delightful, for strengthened by Cecelia's example, and most anxious to please and gratify her, she exerted herself to the utmost to shake off her natural diffidence, and was consequently able to appear as she was, a lively, intelligent and agreeable girl. As a stranger she was talked of and commented on, and sharing all the advantages of the wealth, luxury and popularity of her cousin, she became at once the fashion, and was pronounced very lovely. Fashion! that omnipotent goddess, whose fiats and taste are so capricious, and yet before whom most mortals bow in lowly submission, and wanting whose sanction, as Miss Edgeworth says in Patronage, "not even Venus with her Cestus would be pronounced lovely." Our little Ellen then was the fashion, and was very much caressed. Her modest and retiring manners were pronounced the most charming in the world—so lady-like—her diffidence was dignity—her accomplishments were great but hidden, so said those favored few before whom she had ventured (consented they called it) to sing, and who boasted of the honor to those who had not been so fortunate. And her small hands and feet, which at home few knew she possessed, or thought them worth speaking of if they did, were here celebrated for their beauty, and extolled as miracles of beauty and grace.

Cecelia was in ecstasies at her cousin's success, and at her own share in producing it. No young lady dislikes being admired and making conquests, no matter how well stored and well balanced her mind may be, and to love and to be loved is one of her privileges and happinesses. This too was added to Ellen's triumphs.

But before we go further with our story, we must take a peep at Cecelia's heart and see how all went on there. Ellen had long suspected that one of the most attentive and devoted of her beaux, and who was one of the most agreeable and intelligent among them, was in reality devoted to her cousin, and that Cecelia in her heart of hearts preferred him to every other. She had noticed that under all her gaiety of manner, and with all her apparent lightness of heart, she concealed some trouble that she was either too proud or too sensitive to allow to be seen; and she strongly suspected that a preference for this gentleman was the cause. She determined to watch them well when together to be sure of his sentiments, and then to try and win her cousin's confidence, and be a comforter to her. That Mr. Marsdale cared nothing for herself she was sure, as he was ever introducing the most agreeable men to her, and those most dangerous as rivals, which was not at all like a lover; and seemed to take the greatest interest in the courtship of his own most particular friend, who was now Ellen's devoted. She was not long doubtful as to the sentiments Mr. Marsdale entertained for her cousin, and after many tears from Cecelia she found her suspicions were right, and that she did like one who was every way worthy of her, but who was poor in this world's goods, "and whose modest opinion of his own merit like yours, dear Ellen," said Cecelia, "he allows to stand between his happiness and mine. He thinks I am too good for him, and that it would not be high-minded and honorable in him, who has what the world calls nothing, to offer to one who happens to have plenty of this world's gear. Meantime he could not help letting me see he loved me, and I cannot help loving him, and so we stand—he will not offer to me from principle, and I must pretend not to care for him from pride; and his too humble opinion of his own merits will wreck the happiness of both."

"Do not say so, dear Cecelia," replied Ellen: "you say his opinion of himself like mine is too humble, and yet see how that same quality you so deplore my possessing, has been my greatest gain—for Mr. Seymour told me yesterday when he made me so very, very happy, by begging for that love which was already his, that one of my greatest charms in his eyes was that modest merit which had to be sought out and discovered before it can be known, and which you always laughed at as the greatest bar to my success in life. Mr. Marsdale is not half as much wanting in anything that makes him unequal to you as I am to Mr. Seymour; and I am sure with a little more encouragement on your part than you now give him, he will be unable to keep silence much longer, for any one may see how desperately he is in love with you."

That evening a small but gay party had assembled in Cecelia's drawing-rooms. Ellen, gayer and

happier than she ever thought it possible her lot on earth could make her, was conversing with her lover, or rather listening to his raptures, and to the surprise of many the exclusive, dignified, fastidious and extremely wealthy Mr. Seymour seemed to be transformed under the influence of his love into a most amusing and gay companion, and to be full of mirth and spirits. He had with mock solemnity been telling the fortune of all the company at cards, and as they accused him of cheating at that, he turned to Cecelia and begged her to try her fate by the fanciful and classical method of the sortes vergillianæ. A happy thought darted into Ellen's brain as he proposed this, and taking from the table a small volume, she eagerly exclaimed—

"Oh, do, Cecelia, and here is the very book for the purpose—the beauties of Shakspeare."

With these words she placed the volume in her cousin's hands. Cecelia took it, but said with a gay laugh—

"I am too superstitious to try my fate myself, and, therefore, depute you to do it for me, Mr. Seymour."

As she spoke, she gave him a sprig of jassamine with which to part the leaves of the book: and it was finally decided that all who felt nervous on the subject should have the same privilege and appoint a proxy.

This was agreed to, and Mr. Seymour proceeded to divide the leaves for Cecelia's fate with the stalk of the jassamine sprig. The book opened with the point of the divider on the passage, "she never told her love, but let concealment like a worm in the bud feed on her damask cheek." A gay laugh followed this quotation, as the most absurd of fates to give to the bright young lady of the mansion. But a single glance from Cecelia spoke volumes to her cousin. Again and again with various success was the magic volume tried, and great was the mirth that it produced—at last when Ellen had tried hers, and all sorts of devotion from her lover had been improvised by Mr. Seymour for her fate, the book was passed to Marsdale, who immediately handed it to Cecelia, begging her with a look of great and intense feeling for once to be his fate. Helen stood by her side, and declaring that in such a momentous affair two wise heads must be better than one, slipped the jassamine stalk in a place she had previously marked, and then leaving the book to be given back by her cousin, she turned away. One glance Cecelia cast on it, and then with a burning blush she handed it to her lover, who read as follows—

"Hope is a lover's staff, walk hence with that
And manage it against despairing thoughts."

As he finished it their eyes met for an instant, and then the lady turned hers on the ground.

This was the last fate to be tried, and immediately after the company departed—all but one. Need it be said who it was? It was one who had entered the house a most despairing, self-tormenting lover, but who seizing the hope presented to him to manage it against "despairing thoughts," that he left it an exulting, happy, successful one—blessing Shakspeare and all fate—trying fooleries, and all but worshipping the ready witted woman who had helped him to his happiness. Had not our Ellen profitted by her sojourn with strangers?

She returned home greatly improved in beauty and manners, and radiant with happiness—and not long afterward Cecelia as a bride made her aunt another visit, not to carry off Ellen, but to see her carried off by a worshipping, devoted husband. The day after the wedding, as Mrs. Arlington was expressing her thankfulness at Ellen's brilliant prospects of happiness, Cecelia laughingly reminded her aunt of their conversation the preceding winter, on the day after Ellen's unhappy ball.

"Do you remember your reply to me when I said I would make Ellen a belle?"

"Yes," said her aunt, "I do, and I acknowledge you have worked a miracle in my eyes. But you must acknowledge, Cecelia, that I was right in my opinion, that modest merit would sooner or later be recognized. Hers has been so, and so has that of your husband, which you tell me was so near interfering in your happiness."

"No, I acknowledge no such thing, aunt," said Cecelia, laughing—"it was Mr. Seymour's modest impudence that would not be denied that gained him Ellen, and it was my modest assurance that overcame Marsdale's diffidence, was it not, Edward?" turning to her husband, who had just then entered the room.

"Ah!" said Edward, "I should have gone to Mexico I do believe, and thrown away my wretched life if the blessed angel of hope had not come to my rescue just then."

"But I had to hold out my anchor pretty conspicuously before you condescended to see it," said Cecelia. "So, aunt, I still hold to my opinion that it is the assuming ones that have the best of it in the world, and the modest ones are pushed in the back-ground."

"And I to mine," said Mrs. Arlington, "that modest merit will be rewarded—only it must be patient and wait."

MRS. DODDINGTON'S BALL.

BY GRACE MANNERS.

"Lords, to the dance—a ball! a ball!"

Mrs. Doddington's party was a most successful affair. For full two hours had the whole square (a most fashionable one, reader,) been annoyed or amused, as the case might be, with the ceaseless roll of carriages, the clanging of carriage steps, as each in turn deposited its charge, the oaths of the coachmen, and the prancing of restive horses, the raising of windows for the numerous serving damsels in the neighborhood to take a peep at the hooded and cloaked ladies, as they tripped up the steps and vanished into the illuminated hall. Soon, however, all was comparatively quiet, and save for the occasional bursts of music that came through the door, as it now and then opened for the admittance of an ultra fashionable dandy, and the light that was thrown on the pavement from the lamp inside, all seemed as usual in the square. But

"Within 't was brilliant all and light,
A thronging scene of figures bright."

Plumes waved and jewels flashed; ladies smiled and gentlemen flirted; and Mrs. Doddington was in the seventh heaven of ecstatic delight—for she had made a hit, a palpable hit, and felt herself securely perched upon the topmost rong of fashion's ladder; that most capricious goddess, to whom for many years her unceasing prayers had been made, with but doubtful success. But now, as she glanced through her gorgeous rooms, and caught sight of first one and then another of the well-born, gracious ladies, as the Germans have it, who at last she had been able to collect at her party, she was supremely happy for the time, and forgot all the rebuffs, the freezing civility, and the scarcely concealed contempt with which her former attempts had been met. But this, gentle reader, was a fancy ball; and if Hecate herself were to issue notes for such an affair, in a place that shall be nameless to "ears polite," she would finds crowds willing to favor her, "for that night only." Not that Mrs. Doddington was anything like Hecate, far, far from it; she was a right pretty woman—vulgarly pretty—fat, fair and forty; and now dressed as a Sultana, with her thick ankles concealed by her full Turkish pantaloons, her fat, white arms covered with sparkling bracelets, and her face shining like a full moon from beneath her Oriental turban, she was the "belle ideal" of a Turkish beauty, who had been fed on Odessa wheat until she had filled up the magic ring, whose circle decides the point with a Turk, and is his standard of beauty as regards the female form divine.

Do you wonder then that Mrs. Doddington was happy? There was not a single blot on the fair plan of her ball—not one vulgar relation was there to stir up her anger; the death of a worthy old uncle of hers and theirs—a respectable tailor—having, most fortunately, as she thought, just occurred, and kept them all out of her way; and no one of those present she flattered herself knew of the connexion. But she was mistaken. More than one of the grey-headed papas of her fashionable young guests had for many years worn garments of her uncle's manufacture, and knew of the death of the respectable old tailor; and what was worse, had in times gone by met his pretty niece in the shop, as in her girlhood she passed in and out with her then loved cousins. But over all these things she trusted the waters of Lethe had rolled—at all events they were banished from her thoughts now, and she mingled with her guests, being introduced now and then to persons she did not know, and complimenting all upon the felicitous taste displayed in his or her dress.

Two of these young ladies now attracted her attention, and *one* her especial devotion. She was a stranger, who as yet had not been able, even with the efficient aid of a very dashing looking Fra Diavola, to make her way through the crowd to her hostess. This was now accomplished by that worthy individual coming to her; and the introduction was made in due form, and the young lady mentioned as Miss Percy. Following her was a young girl, her cousin, to whom Mrs. Doddington bowed slightly, and then turned to the stranger, whom she immediately began to overwhelm with flattery and thanks, for honoring her on so short a notice, as Miss Percy had only been in town a few days. A few civil replies from the young lady contented her, and she went off to her toils and duty elsewhere, and left the young ladies together.

A lovely couple they were; and while Capuchin friars and peasant girls; stately dames of the old regime, and Indian warriors dance together; while Sir Peter Teazle and Ida of Athens are hopping in a Polka, and a tall French chasseur and Titania are whirling in a waltz, we will abide with these two young girls as "lookers on in Venice" for a short period. But first we must describe them. Miss Percy was a sparkling, bright, rather mischievous looking beauty; a brunette of the most striking order, with regular, finely chiselled features, raven black hair, and flashing hazle eyes that looked full of intelligence, and, softly be it spoken, not a little sarcastic; and now robed as a novice, with her simple white dress and flowing veil, her crown of white roses, and her rosy fingers looked very like an escaped nun, that no convent walls would ever lure back to their dingy precincts, especially when as now surrounded by a

knot of beaux, with whom she was exchanging courtesies and making promises of future dances, when she had found out who the Jews, Turks and Infidels were, by whom she was solicited. Different in every respect was Ellen Arlington from her cousin, both in appearance, dress and manner; and now making her first acquaintance with that motley scene, a fancy ball, she was not a little frightened by the strangely disguised figures who claimed her notice. Her own appearance was too striking, and she was too lovely herself to pass without many comments. A blonde, with a profusion of soft, fair hair, a skin like wax, and eyes so "deeply, darkly, beautifully blue," as to be almost black; robed as Night, with a black lace dress and ample veil, spangled with stars, a diamond cresent on her forehead, she was most lovely to look upon, and frightened as she was, she was not insensible to the many whispered praises of her own charms that met her ear. What girl ever was? And when it comes from knights and troubadors (carpet knights to be sure) as it now did to Ellen Arlington, is it to be wondered at if she speedily forgot her fright, and gave herself up to the enjoyment of the fairy scene.

"Ah," whispered a dark eyed youth, most gorgeously arrayed as a prince of some unknown kingdom or other. "I never before understood the full force of Byron's apostrophe, 'how beautiful is Night;' but now I *feel* it. Will you not, Miss Arlington, tread a measure with me? and then those stars on your veil can wheel their mystic dance, and fair Dian, throned on your milk white brow, can from that envied spot look down approval."

"Hail '*sparkling*' goddess from thine ebon throne," exclaimed another; "deign to look upon a suffering mortal, who, moon-struck, will never recover his lost wits, unless graciously favored by thy hand in the mazy waltz."

"What a profanation," said a sentimental looking youth, attired as a Troubador, "to address such an etherial looking being with such mundane trash. Deign rather, sovereign lady of the skies, to gaze with me through yonder casement at your fair sister stars, who are now trying in vain to emulate your brightness."

Bewildered by this storm of nonsense and mock sentiment from gentlemen that she hardly knew, Ellen gladly turned away to dance with one of them, thinking as she did so that the pleasure she received from their compliments was fully counterbalanced by the pain their freedom of manner caused her; "but I suppose," she thought, "that is one of the abuses of a fancy ball, for I see Cecelia seems to be pretty much in the same case, so I shall try and forget these foolish speeches, and think only of enjoying myself." Miss Percy was her cousin's vis-a-vis, and as she now stood surrounded by gentlemen, answering each one in the same way in which he addressed her, paying back the fulsome flattery she received in the same coin, and then by a witty remark exciting the laughter of the whole group; Cecelia seemed to her cousin to be in her element, and she was highly amused in watching and admiring her ready wit and graceful manners, and wishing she could attain her happy readiness instead of loosing all command of intellect from rhymes when she most wanted it.

Mrs. Doddington now made her appearance among the group of Miss Percy's listeners, and as they all respectfully made way for her, many a glance was exchanged in anticipation of the amusement her absurdities was about to furnish them. She was in a great flutter of spirits, and approached Miss Percy to reiterate her thanks for coming to her.

"I think it," she said, "not the least of my gratification of to-night, that my house is the first honored by the appearance of so distinguished a belle as Miss Percy, on *this* visit of yours to our city. I hardly hoped you would arrive in time, for I have known for weeks you were expected."

"The pleasure is all on my side, I assure you, Mrs. Doddington," politely returned her guest, "and I am only sorry that I had not time to prepare a prettier dress for your very brilliant ball. But this was the soonest arranged, and my heart warms to the novice's dress from my long residence in the Georgetown convent when a school girl. I had a great fancy to be a nun myself then, and so had a niece of yours that I was very fond of there, Mary Mason; she used often to speak of aunt Doddington, and the old uncle she lived with, uncle Jones; where is Mary now, Mrs. Doddington? I should be so very glad to see her again."

Had the earth opened at the feet of Mrs. Doddington; had her chandelier with its thousand lustres fallen from its high estate; or had all her prized and valued fashionable friends suddenly turned into demons, and this smiling, pretty girl into chief imp of the troupe, she could not have been more stunned and confounded. For uncle Jones was the tailor uncle, just dead, and Mary Mason was living in his family; and that Miss Percy, the handsome, distingué, high-born, wealthy Miss Percy, should know all this (and know she did not doubt she did, as school girls are so communicative) was too much to bear. At first vague thoughts of denying the whole connexion rushed into her mind; then of saying Mary was dead, or that she had quarrelled with her, and knew nothing of her, flitted into her brain; but that would speedily be discovered to be untrue, and she had made up her mind to say she was not in the city, when as her perplexed faculties regained their tone, and the whizzing in her ears ceased sufficiently to enable her to hear what was said, she found a gentleman answering all Miss Percy's questions about her niece; relating the death of her uncle, and finally offering to convey her to the house where Mary was still living, as he was sure she would not be able to call and see Miss Percy at such a time.

How Mrs. Doddington extricated herself from the group she never knew; but the rest of the evening she fancied she saw a smile of derision on the faces of her guests, and that they all despised her, and fervently did she wish she had never thought of giving this ball. Not so Miss Percy. Utterly unsuspicious of the consternation her question had excited, and not being able to enter into, or comprehend such infinite meanness as that which had prompted her hostess to think of disowning her own niece, she continued her conversation with the gentleman, her informant of

these (to her) simple facts, and soon other topics were introduced, and Mary Mason was for the time forgotten in the more puzzling train of ideas by which she was excited.

As she rested from time to time during the continuance of a waltz, she observed a new and most distinguished looking person had been added to the motley group that had gathered round the waltzers. Most magnificently attired in an Albanian dress, the gentleman stood leaning against a door in conversation with another, and whenever she looked toward him she met his earnest gaze fixed upon herself. That he was a stranger was evident, as he spoke but to the one gentleman, and that she had never seen him before, she was sure. Great, therefore, was her surprise, when at the ending of the waltz as she passed into the hall for the sake of a cooler atmosphere, he left his companion and approached her, and in a voice that was evidently disguised, addressed her by name, and then added—"nymph, in thy orisons be all *my* sins remembered." At first she felt indignant at the liberty thus taken by him without an introduction; but as he proceeded, and his voice lowered its tone, something familiar in it struck her ear, and she determined to go on with the conversation, that she might find out who among her acquaintance could so disguise himself as to baffle her penetration. That he knew her, and that well, she speedily discovered, and piqued by his successful disguise she continued to converse with him, hoping that by some oversight he would betray himself. But none such occurred; ever on his guard, he gave no clue to his own identity, while at the same time he showed such a correct knowledge of her affairs, travels and journeyings, that owning herself thoroughly mystified she rose, and with a slight glance at his well shaped feet, which she declared she almost believed to see cloven, she left him to join the dancers. "I shall see you at your aunt's to-morrow," were his parting words, "and trust you will not *then* disown me for a friend."

No one could enlighten her ignorance as to who he was; and Mrs. Doddington, to whom she applied, declared she had forgotten his name, but that he was a very distingué personage, and had just arrived from Europe, where he had procured that beautiful dress, which was the real costume of an Albanian chief, and not a mere fancy dress. "A very distingué person, and just returned from abroad," repeated Miss Percy, and as she ran over in her mind the many such personages she might know, a vague hope, accompanied with a thrill of delight, arose in her bosom that this might be *the one*, the favored one, who, months ago, when she was in Europe had been devoted to her, and made the first and only impression her heart had ever received. But that she should not know him, under any disguise, seemed impossible: and yet voice, eyes, figure, and all seemed changed. Her heart bounded with rapture at the bare thought of its being this favored mortal, and everything now seemed charming in her eyes under the influence of her own happy feelings, which before had begun to tire and weary her.

To seek out Ellen, the fair Queen of Night, and propose leaving the ball, was now her aim; but when she saw her seated apart from the crowd, partly screened by a window curtain, with a handsome youth, attired as Endymion, on a low ottoman at her side, and by the looks of devotion and rapture on his face, and the blushes and happiness in hers, suspected that a very tender scene was being enacted; she had the charity to withdraw unseen, and once more joining the waltzers, gave her cousin time to recover her serenity sufficiently to appear before the eyes of others. Carefully had Cecelia kept the secret of the enamored Endymion, which had been confided to her by him the day of her arrival, of his intention to wear that costume. And now that his fanciful and happy gallantry had been crowned with success, and his coy goddess had confessed that his love was not unrequited, and owned that this last piece of devotion was irresistible; she was able to rejoice most completely with him, and the exulting hope throbbed in her heart that perhaps from this ball too she might be able to date her happiness.

Poor Mrs. Doddington meantime, though everything had gone off to all appearance most successfully, was wretched. She saw and knew that many of her guests despised her for despising her own relatives, and that they thought her a most unfeeling creature for thus outraging the decencies of life, by having this ball while her uncle was unburied; while she was vainly flattering herself they had never known of his existence. She felt she was *with* them, but not of them; and when having curtsied out the last of her great acquaintance, she heard as she passed the door of the now nearly empty supper-room, some gay sprigs of fashion, whom she had asked to her house without knowing them, because they were the fashion, give as a toast in her best champaigne, "the memory of our hostesses worthy uncle, that ninth part of a man," and the shouts of laughter that followed, her mortification was complete. And as she laid her aching head on her pillow, she acknowledged all was "bitterness and vexation of spirit."

If Mrs. Doddington did not enjoy the next day's reminiscence of her ball, Miss Percy and Ellen Arlington did. The delicious chat over the breakfast-table next morning; the acknowledged happiness of the one, and the secret unacknowledged hopes of the other were alike delightful, and made both confess that it was the most enchanting ball they had ever been at. Noon saw Miss Percy seated in her aunt's drawing-room, looking as lovely in her morning costume as in her evening fancy dress; but not wasting her "sweetness on the desert air," for she is talking with a very stylish looking young man, who is seated close to her in that most dangerous of all seats a "confidence," and from the pleased looks of both neither find it disagreeable.

"And so it was by a mere accident that you stayed for the ball last evening," said Miss Percy.

"By the merest," replied the gentleman. "I had been to Washington looking for some one that I was told in New York, where I arrived a fortnight since, I should find there. But my search was vain, for I found my friend had returned to Boston. In the cars I met an old college chum, who persuaded me to stay here half a day, as we had not met for years. In the

course of conversation the ball was spoken of, and *you* were mentioned as one of the greatest attractions expected there. My friend was going, and as my search for my Washington friend could now wait," and here a look from the gentleman caused the eyes of the lady to drop, and a blush to mantle on her cheek, "I determined to try if I could see and speak to you without your recognizing me. How successful I was you have confessed; and I believe you had absolutely forgotten me: I should have known you in any disguise under Heaven."

"Not if I had changed the color of my hair and eyebrows, and spoke in a 'falsetto' voice as you did; to say nothing of the ferocious beard with which you covered half of your face. And then thinking as I did you were still in Europe. Even now that I see and know that it was you, I can hardly trace the resemblance."

"I am glad," replied the gentleman, "that imagination if not memory was my friend, and that you had allowed that to wander and conjure up the thought that it might possibly be your Naples friend who had thus suddenly appeared."

And now, reader, when a handsome young lady and gentleman recur to Italy and Italian scenes enjoyed together; when sails on the bay of Naples, and sunset and moonlight effects, and bewitching songs are talked over; when Rome and its carnival joys, and St. Peter and its glories are discussed; when Venice and its gondolas, and its barcarolles, and its moonlit seas are touched on; when sighs become audible, and blushes frequent as these scenes are recalled, it is but kind to turn away and pretend not to see or heed. So we must do, and jumping to the end, the natural end of all these sighs and blushes, only say that in a very short time after Mrs. Doddington's ball, that good lady having swallowed all her vexation emanating therefrom, was boasting to every one "that at her fancy ball occurred the romantic incident of Miss Percy and Mr. St. Clair's first meeting on his return from Europe, where he had been dreadfully in love with her, and after he had been to Washington on purpose to see her. That he had had a large fortune left him, and was now able to marry, as before he was too poor and too proud to offer himself to such an heiress. And a handsome couple they would be. And at her ball, too, pretty little Ellen Arlington had completed her conquest of the rich Southerner. Mrs. Gray, she looked so lovely in her fancy dress as Queen of Night; and that this ball having gone off with such éclat, she had determined to have another one next winter." She never mentioned the "toast" she overheard, but digested that morsel in private like a wise woman; and when she found that Miss Percy had been to see her niece, not only once, but two or three times, and had taken Mr. St. Clair there too, she determined she would never again be guilty of slighting any of her relations—that were young and pretty, and that might chance from their own merits to have made friends among the "upper ten thousand." These two matches and the romantic incidents appertaining thereto, have of course greatly raised fancy balls in the estimation of all deep thinking young ladies—for who knows what may happen in the way of sudden likings, when Ellen Arlington's fancy dress brought the fastidious Mr. Gray to his acknowledgments; and Miss Percy's conjured up her lover from Europe. At Mrs. Doddington's next ball of the kind ten Queens of Night are expected to sparkle at once; and a whole convent of Novices to be let loose. I, therefore, warn all young bachelors to beware how they tempt their fate at fancy balls.

MY FIRST SCHOOL MISTRESS.

BY MRS. ANN S. STEPHENS.

"He hung his head—each noble aim,
And hope and feeling which had slept
From boyhood's hour, that instant came
Fresh o'er him, and he wept—he wept!
Blest tears of soul-felt penitence,
In whose benign, redeeming flow,
Is felt the first, the only sense
Of guiltless joy that guilt can know."

I COULD not have been more than six years of age when she died, and yet I remember my first school-mistress as distinctly as the faces that passed before me an hour since. She was a quiet, gentle creature, that won the love of every living thing that looked upon her. In repose, her face was sad, sweet, and full of thought, but not handsome; though, when lighted up by a smile, it seemed beautiful as an angel's. I was a mere child, but my heart yearned toward her with clinging tenderness whenever she bent those large, loving eyes on my face, as if she had been my own mother, or a dear, elder sister. When she laid her small hand on my hair, and praised my work, her low voice would send a thrill of strange pleasure through my veins, and I returned her care with a love that lingers round my heart even yet, though years have swept over her grave, and her name is almost forgotten.

Miss Bishop had not been among us a fortnight, before we knew that she was unhappy. The color on her delicate cheek was unsteady, and sometimes far, far too brilliant. There were times when she would sit and gaze through the window into the grave-yard, with her large, melancholy eyes surcharged with a strange light, as if she were pondering on the time when she, also, might lie down in the cold earth and be at rest. She was not gloomy—far from it; at times she was gay and child-like as ourselves. On a rainy day, when the grass was wet, and we were obliged to find amusement within doors, I have known her to join in our little games with a mirth as free as that which gushed up from the lightest heart among us. At such times, she would sing to us by the hour together, till the galleries of the old church seemed alive with bird music. But her cheerfulness was not constant; it seemed to arise more from principle and a strong resolution to overcome sorrow, than from a spontaneous impulse of the heart.

It is strange what fancies will sometimes enter the minds of children—how quick they are to perceive, and how just are the deductions they will often draw from slight premises. It was not long before the sorrow which evidently hung over our young mistress, became a subject of speculation and comment in our play-hours. One morning she came to the house rather later than usual. We were all gathered about the door to receive her; and when she waved her hand in token that we should take our places, there was a cheerful strife which should obey the signal first. Never do I remember her so beautiful as on that morning. The clear snow of her forehead, and that portion of her slender neck, exposed by her high dress, mingled in delicate contrast with the damask brightness on her cheek and lips. An expression of contentment, subdued the sometimes painful brilliancy of her eyes, and with a beautiful smile, beaming over that face in thanks for the offering, she took a half-open white rose, with a faint blush slumbering in its core, from the hand of a little girl, and twined it among her hair, just over the left temple, before taking her seat. The morning was warm, and all the doors had been left open to admit a free circulation of air through the old building. My seat was near the pulpit, directly opposite the Northern door, which commanded a view of the highway. I was gazing idly at the sunshine which lighted up a portion of the lawn in beautiful contrast with the thick grass which still lay in the shade, glittering with rain-drops—for there had been a shower during the night—when a strange horseman appeared, galloping along the road. He checked his horse, and after surveying the old meeting-house a moment, turned into the footpath leading to the Southern door.

Seldom have I seen a more lofty carriage or imposing person, than that of the stranger as he rode slowly across the lawn. His face, at a first view appeared eminently handsome; but on a second perusal, a close observer might have detected something daring and impetuous, which would have taught him to suspect impudence, if not want of principle in the possessor. He was mounted on a noble horse, and his dress, though carelessly worn, was both rich and elegant. He had ridden close to the door, and was dismounting, when Miss Bishop looked up. A slight cry burst from her lips, and starting from her seat, she turned wildly toward the side door as if meditating an escape; but the stranger had scarcely set his foo within the building, when she moved down the aisle, though her face was deadly pale, and there was a look of mingled terror and grief in her eyes. The stranger advanced to meet her with a quick, eager step, and put forth his hand. At first she seemed about to reject it, and when she did extend hers, it was tremblingly and with evident reluctance. He retained her hand in his, and bent forward, as if about to salute her. She shrunk back, shuddering

beneath his gaze; and we could see that deep crimson flush dart over her cheek like the shadow of a bird, flitting across the sun's disc. The stranger dropped her hand, and set his lips hard together, while she wrung her hands and uttered some words, it seemed, of entreaty. He looked hard in her face as she spoke, but without appearing to heed her appeal, he walked a few paces up the aisle, and taking off his hat, leaned heavily against a pew door which chanced to be open. His was a bold countenance! I have seldom looked on a forehead so massive and full of intellect. Yet the dark kindling eye, the haughty lip, bespoke an untamed will, and passions yet to be conquered, or to be deeply repented of in remorse and in tears. As he stood before that timid girl, she shrunk from, and yet seemed almost fascinated by the extraordinary power of expression that passed over his face. His dark eyes grew misty and melting with tenderness as he took her hand again, reverently between both his, and pleaded with her as one pleading for his last hope in life. We could not hear his words, but there was something in the deep tones of his voice, and in that air of mingled pride, energy and supplication, which few women could have resisted. But she did resist, though even a child might have seen that the effort was breaking her heart. Sadly, and in a voice full of suppressed agony and regret, she answered him, her small hands were clasped imploringly, and her sweet face was lifted to his with the expression of a tried spirit, beseeching the tempter to depart and leave her in peace.

Again he answered her, but now his voice trembled, and its deep tones were broken as they swelled through the hollow building. When he had done, she spoke again in the same tone as before, and with the expression of sad resolve unmoved from her face. He became angry at last; his eyes kindled, and his heavy forehead gathered in a frown. She had extended her hand, as if to take farewell; but he dashed it away, and, regardless of her timid voice, rushed toward the door.

Miss Bishop tottered up the aisle, and sunk to her chair, trembling all over, and drawing her breath in quick, painful gasps. We all started up, and were about to crowd around her with useless tears and lamentations, when the young man came up the aisle again. We shrunk back around the pulpit stairs, and watched his motions, like a flock of frightened birds when the hawk is hovering in the air above them.

"Mary," he said, bending over her chair, and speaking in a low, suppressed voice—for all traces of passion had disappeared from his face. "Mary, once again, and for the last time, I entreat you take back the cruel words you have spoken. They will be the ruin of us both—for, conceal it as you will, you cannot have forgotten the past. There *was* a time——"

"Do not speak of it, George Mason, if you would not break my heart here, and at once—do not—in mercy, arouse memories that never will sleep again!" said the poor girl, rising slowly to her feet, and wringing her hands, over which tear-drops fell like rain.

"Be calm, Mary, I beseech you. I will say nothing that ought to pain or terrify you thus—consent to fulfil the engagement so cruelly broken off, and here, in this sacred place, I promise never to stand beside a gambling-table, or touch another card in my life. I know that in other things I have sinned against you, almost beyond forgiveness, but I will do anything, everything that you can dictate to atone for the wrongs done that—that poor girl, and I will never, never see her again."

Miss Bishop looked up with a painful smile, and a faint color spread from her face, down over her neck and bosom.

"Can you take away the stain which has been selfishly flung on her pure spirit—can you gather up the affections of a young heart when once wickedly lavished, and teach them to bud and blossom in the bosom which sin has desolated? As well might you attempt to give its perfume back to the withered rose, or take away the stain from a bruised lily, when its urn has been broken and trampled in the dust. Vain man! Go and ask forgiveness of that God, whose most lovely work you have despoiled. With all your pride and wealth of intellect, you have no power to make atonement to that one human being, whom you have led into sin and sorrow."

She turned from him as the last words died on her lips, and covering her face, wept as one who had no comfort left. Tears stood in that proud man's eye, and his haughty lip trembled as he gazed upon her. He did not speak again, but lifted her hand reverently to his lips, and hastened away.

A week went by, and every day we could see that our "young mistress" walked more feebly up the lawn, and that the color in her cheek became painfully vivid. She had always been troubled with a slight cough, but now it often startled us with its frequency and hollowness. On Saturday, it had been her habit to give us some little proof of approbation —a certificate, sometimes neatly written, but more frequently ornamented by a tiny rose—a butterfly or grasshopper, from her own exquisite pencil. On the Saturday night in question, she had distributed her little gifts, and it chanced that a simple daisy, most beautifully colored, fell to me. I had long had a strange wish to possess a lock of her hair, and this night found courage to express it. As she extended the daisy for my acceptance, I drew close to her chair, and whispered, "if you please, Miss Bishop, I would much rather have some of your hair—that beautiful bright curl that always hangs back of your ear."

With a gentle smile, she took her scissors and cut off the curl which I had so long coveted. She seemed pleased with my eager expressions of delight, and holding up the ringlet allowed it to fall slowly down to my palm, in a succession of rich glossy rings. I had the daisy, too, and went home a proud and happy child.

The next Monday was a melancholy day to us all, for our mistress was ill—very ill. The doctor was afraid that she never would be well again. We sat down together as they told us this, and cried as if some great evil had fallen upon us. We saw her once again, but it was in the gloom of a death-chamber, and then she was in her old place again, there in

beneath his gaze; and we could see that deep crimson flush dart over her cheek like the shadow of a bird, flitting across the sun's disc. The stranger dropped her hand, and set his lips hard together, while she wrung her hands and uttered some words, it seemed, of entreaty. He looked hard in her face as she spoke, but without appearing to heed her appeal, he walked a few paces up the aisle, and taking off his hat, leaned heavily against a pew door which chanced to be open. His was a bold countenance! I have seldom looked on a forehead so massive and full of intellect. Yet the dark kindling eye, the haughty lip, bespoke an untamed will, and passions yet to be conquered, or to be deeply repented of in remorse and in tears. As he stood before that timid girl, she shrunk from, and yet seemed almost fascinated by the extraordinary power of expression that passed over his face. His dark eyes grew misty and melting with tenderness as he took her hand again, reverently between both his, and pleaded with her as one pleading for his last hope in life. We could not hear his words, but there was something in the deep tones of his voice, and in that air of mingled pride, energy and supplication, which few women could have resisted. But she did resist, though even a child might have seen that the effort was breaking her heart. Sadly, and in a voice full of suppressed agony and regret, she answered him, her small hands were clasped imploringly, and her sweet face was lifted to his with the expression of a tried spirit, beseeching the tempter to depart and leave her in peace.

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Miss Bishop tottered up the aisle, and sunk to her chair, trembling all over, and drawing her breath in quick, painful gasps. We all started up, and were about to crowd around her with useless tears and lamentations, when the young man came up the aisle again. We shrunk back around the pulpit stairs, and watched his motions, like a flock of frightened birds when the hawk is hovering in the air above them.

"Mary," he said, bending over her chair, and speaking in a low, suppressed voice—for all traces of passion had disappeared from his face. "Mary, once again, and for the last time, I entreat you take back the cruel words you have spoken. They will be the ruin of us both—for, conceal it as you will, you cannot have forgotten the past. There *was* a time——"

"Do not speak of it, George Mason, if you would not break my heart here, and at once—do not—in mercy, arouse memories that never will sleep again!" said the poor girl, rising slowly to her feet, and wringing her hands, over which tear-drops fell like rain.

"Be calm, Mary, I beseech you. I will say nothing that ought to pain or terrify you thus—consent to fulfil the engagement so cruelly broken off, and here, in this sacred place, I promise never to stand beside a gambling-table, or touch another card in my life. I know that in other things I have sinned against you, almost beyond forgiveness, but I will do anything, everything that you can dictate to atone for the wrongs done that—that poor girl, and I will never, never see her again."

Miss Bishop looked up with a painful smile, and a faint color spread from her face, down over her neck and bosom.

"Can you take away the stain which has been selfishly flung on her pure spirit—can you gather up the affections of a young heart when once wickedly lavished, and teach them to bud and blossom in the bosom which sin has desolated? As well might you attempt to give its perfume back to the withered rose, or take away the stain from a bruised lily, when its urn has been broken and trampled in the dust. Vain man! Go and ask forgiveness of that God, whose most lovely work you have despoiled. With all your pride and wealth of intellect, you have no power to make atonement to that one human being, whom you have led into sin and sorrow."

She turned from him as the last words died on her lips, and covering her face, wept as one who had no comfort left. Tears stood in that proud man's eye, and his haughty lip trembled as he gazed upon her. He did not speak again, but lifted her hand reverently to his lips, and hastened away.

A week went by, and every day we could see that our "young mistress" walked more feebly up the lawn, and that the color in her cheek became painfully vivid. She had always been troubled with a slight cough, but now it often startled us with its frequency and hollowness. On Saturday, it had been her habit to give us some little proof of approbation—a certificate, sometimes neatly written, but more frequently ornamented by a tiny rose—a butterfly or grasshopper, from her own exquisite pencil. On the Saturday night in question, she had distributed her little gifts, and it chanced that a simple daisy, most beautifully colored, fell to me. I had long had a strange wish to possess a lock of her hair, and this night found courage to express it. As she extended the daisy for my acceptance, I drew close to her chair, and whispered, "if you please, Miss Bishop, I would much rather have some of your hair—that beautiful bright curl that always hangs back of your ear."

With a gentle smile, she took her scissors and cut off the curl which I had so long coveted. She seemed pleased with my eager expressions of delight, and holding up the ringlet allowed it to fall slowly down to my palm, in a succession of rich glossy rings. I had the daisy, too, and went home a proud and happy child.

The next Monday was a melancholy day to us all, for our mistress was ill—very ill. The doctor was afraid that she never would be well again. We sat down together as they told us this, and cried as if some great evil had fallen upon us. We saw her once again, but it was in the gloom of a death-chamber, and then she was in her old place again, there in

the broad aisle of the meeting-house, but a coffin was her resting-place, and when we gathered about her, weeping and full of sorrow, she did not hear the voice of her little scholars.

Our mistress was buried back of the old meeting-house, and very often would the children she loved so fondly, linger about her grave. It was a strange fancy, but I seldom visited the shady spot without taking with me the little work-bag which contained her presents, and that one precious ringlet—her last gift. I was never afraid to linger about the resting-places of the dead, and one evening the twilight had settled over me while I still sat by that meekly-made grave. All at once the sound of a heavy footstep startled me, and the shadow of a man fell athwart the grass. I knew him at once, though he was much paler than formerly, and there was an expression of suffering on his face that awoke all my childish sympathy. It was the same man who had visited our mistress on the week before she left us. He seemed surprised at finding a child so near her grave; but when he saw that I recognized him, began to question me about the departed. I told him all, and he wept like a child, for my presence was no restraint upon him. After a time he took me in his arms, and asked if the departed had never given me any present—a picture-book or certificate which I would part with—he would give me a beautiful piece of gold for it. I thought of my precious ringlet, and there was a struggle in my young heart.

"Did you love our mistress?" I inquired, for it seemed wrong to give up the beautiful curl to any one who had not loved her as well as I had done.

"Love her—oh, God, did I not!" he exclaimed, covering his face and bursting into tears—such tears as can only be wrung from a strong, proud man.

"Don't cry, don't cry! I will give you the hair, I will indeed," I exclaimed, eager to pacify him, for it seemed strange and unnatural to see a man weep. Taking the ringlet from my work-bag, I held it up in the moonlight. His tears were checked at the sight, and with a quick breath he took it from my hand. Another burst of grief swept over him, and then he became more calm. When he saw that I would not take the gold, he kissed my forehead, and led me forth from the grave of "my first school-mistress."

"I have never seen the lady, nor do I know her name; she is one selected by the king and my father. I am pledged only to marry when King Charles shall claim my hand for the person whom my father has chosen."

"Then you could not have married Francesca?"

"I could not!"

"And you did not love her!"

"Sir John—Sir John!" cried Bowdon, in a voice which bespoke all the surprise and pain he felt.

"I see you loved, but would not marry her; and I without love *will* marry her if she is upon the face of the earth."

"This is sacrilege—this is terrible—Francesca is dead," cried Lord Bowdon, arising.

"To-morrow we will talk of this further," said the baronet, checking the fierce excitement under which he had spoken; "now, I pray you, let some one show me a chamber. This news has shaken me sorely," and the young men parted. (TO BE CONTINUED.)

THE FIRST THOUGHTS OF A YEAR.

BY HENRY MORFORD.

The New Year's page is spotless yet,
Still waiting to be soiled
By thoughts of passion, early met
By passion's wayward child;
And I am laggard to begin
The records of a year
That must be so much grief and sin,
Not worth recording here.

And yet it must be—there are none
Of all the friends I claim
Who brighten at my noonday sun,
Or sadden at my shame;
So truly as this lettered page,
None who will keep so well
The secrets that, at every age
Man must bend down to tell.

Oh, records of departing time,
Shadows of every hour
Flung out in wild and idle rhyme,
With heedless, careless power—
How may I look at you, when years
Have silvered o'er my hair,
And think how dim and dull appears
The light ye used to wear!

Oh, records of departing love
That lights a trackless way,
Bright yesterday with rays above,
And soiled and dark to-day;
How may I wonder, when my blood
Is chilled with age's frost
That through my veins, so like a flood,
E'er ran the tide I've lost.

It may not be so—how the eyes
Of those I love to day,
From these may bid my image rise
When I am far away,
Calling me upward from the shroud
Where they have laid my youth,
And hoping that a heart so proud
Had not outlived its truth.

And how, perchance, those very eyes
May bend them here to learn,
That stars grow dim in cloudless skies,
And suns to darkness turn,
That on an open brow may yet
Be graven death and sin,
And eyes with seeming tears be wet,
When all is dry within.

I know not how it may be—some
May read to scoff and jeer,
And some be gayer when they come,
And some grow pale with fear;
One dreaming that the seeker found,
One that he missed, the goal,
And one, perchance, in all the round,
Low breathing for his soul.

The page is stained already—up
Proud heart, the course is on,
For feast on high with Faith and Hope,
Or die and sleep alone;
No shrinking from the sacrifice
Because the hour is dark,
Virtue bends not to open Vice,
Nor Pride forgets his mark!

THE COTTAGE HOME.

BY G. E. SENSENEY.

Though Wintry winds may howl around
The cottage, loud and shrill,
And snows fall drifting to the ground,
It knows a pleasure still.

For, gathered by the cheerful hearth,
The ruddy light is thrown
On happy forms, that know of mirth
Its innocence alone.

THE ODOR OF A CRUSHED FLOWER.

BY KATE SUTHERLAND.

Ten years ago, Jessie Morris came to the village, a gay, high-spirited young creature. Jessie had passed two fashionable seasons in New York, and, from having moved in brilliant circles, and among the witty and intelligent, felt herself rather above the quiet, unpretending people of Hawthorne. Her father had been a city merchant; but his business becoming embarrassed, he, in alarm, closed it up, and with a small remnant of property retired to our pleasant village, in order to husband his diminished resources for the education of his younger children. Only to a limited extent, did Jessie understand her father's true position. She did not know how greatly reduced his means were, nor that even what he had in possession was held by a tenure which admitted of a question.

I was thrown frequently into the society of Jessie on her first coming to our village, and soon felt a prejudice against her on account of the air of superiority which she assumed, and the haughtiness of tone and manner too often apparent in her intercourse with others.

"She has no heart," I remember having said of her to a friend. "There is nothing about her to attract you, or cause you to love her. She is beautiful, I will own; but her beauty does not affect you with a sentiment. You look on with a certain cold admiration, but are not drawn toward her."

"Still, she is a pleasant, witty, intelligent girl," replied the friend. "She has a fine flow of spirits, and, I must own, that I cannot help liking her with all her faults."

"Her wit is sharp enough," I answered to this. "But I never call that a merit in any one. Sharp-witted people, I look upon as very disagreeable members of society. For your smart saying or cutting repartee, I have no fancy. Give me, above all things, in my friends, frankness, sincerity and sympathy. These are virtues against which we can lean, without feeling a rough corner, or being wounded by a thorn. Compare Alice Lane with Jessie Morris, and see how strong the contrast. Everything about Alice is real. How gentle, how loving, how earnest is her whole character. You sit by her side and feel that you are near a friend to whom, in an hour of sadness or grief, you could open your heart. Not so with the wild city hoyden, if I must speak so strongly. You would as soon think of casting your pearls before swine as uttering before her anything that your bosom held sacred."

Thus had she at first impressed me. Others liked her better; for she was a girl of high spirits; and pleased the less discriminating with her ready wit, gaiety, and off-hand mode of treating all subjects, even those which should never be approached with lightness.

Time went on his way. A year or two after Jess came to Hawthorne, I left the village, and many years passed before my return. For a short time I kept up a correspondence with an intimate friend; but she, too, left the pleasant place, and from that time until I went back to the green and quiet valley, I knew nothing of what was passing there.

How steadily, like the needle to the pole, turns the heart ever toward the home of early days. Hawthorne was sunshine in my feelings, the loveliest spot on the earth. In my waking dreams, and in my night visions, the green places of that dear retreat were before me, and I could hear the birds singing as of old in the quiet elm tree that stretched its giant arms protectingly over our dwelling. Every year that went by, added to my desire to go back to Hawthorne. At last I was permitted to make the pilgrimage. To an old friend of my mother's, whom I had loved as a child, and leaned upon with affectionate confidence in maturer years, I wrote of my intended visit, and received, in answer, a warm invitation to spend in her family the time I passed in the village. I shall not soon forget the tender embrace with which she received me when I came, nor the few weeks I spent in her family.

But, how all was changed! Nothing seemed exactly as of old. The elm, in whose fluttering leaves I had heard the wind sighing for twenty years, still stood with its arms stretched over the home of my childhood; but it did not look as of old. In what it was changed I could not exactly tell; but the elm tree I

had seen in the many dreams of my early cottage-home, was no longer before me. And so it was everywhere. My eyes seemed to have obtained an intenser vision, and to look through the investing charm to the naked, skeleton reality.

I shall never forget the day I walked over Hawthorne for the first time in nearly ten years. To my eyes, there remained but few of the old traces of beauty; and yet, the honeysuckles twined above the doors and windows as before, and flowers bloomed as thickly in the gardens. Scarcely a tree had been removed, and I did not miss a single dwelling the remembrance of which had brought to my mind a feeling of pleasure. But *I* was changed. I saw with different eyes. My affections were not there, and, already were my thoughts beginning to go back to a distant city, led by the attractive power of absent and beloved ones.

Few real changes were there in external things about Hawthorne. But, when I came to ask for one and another whom I had known, the answers touched me with sadness. Death, sorrow or misfortune had visited many, and a change had passed upon all.

"And what of Jessie Morris?" I asked. "Gay, giddy, thoughtless Jessie Morris?"

"She is still with us," replied my friend.

"And the same as when I left?"

"Oh, no. Far—very far from it. Jessie has looked upon the dark side of life's picture since you were here. The remnant of her father's property, which he brought with him to Hawthorne, he was not permitted to retain. Some old claims against him were revived, which he resisted for some years, but finally they were recovered, and everything he had was swept from his hands. In a year he died, and the mother of Jessie soon followed him. An older brother, upon whom the family depended, died also, and Jessie, with two younger sisters to care for, was left alone."

"Poor girl! What a sad—sad change." All my sympathies were at once awakened.

"It was indeed a sad change. But there was still a sadder experience for Jessie's heart. You remember Edmonds?"

"Very well."

"He gained her affections, and deserted her when sorrow and misfortune came. For only a little while, however, did she droop like a beautiful flower smitten in the storm. She lifted her head again, although tears were on her cheeks and in her eyes. Two dear sisters looked to her as the only one to love and care for them, and they did not look in vain. It was then that her true character began to show itself. I was sitting in this room about two months after her brother's death, when the door opened and the dear girl entered. She was not dressed in mourning garments; they would have but mocked the sorrow that was in her heart. I shall not soon forget the pensive smile that was on her lips, as I welcomed her, nor the quickness with which it faded as she sat down by my side. The errand upon which she had come was mentioned without embarrassment or needless preliminaries.

"'You may not know,' she said, 'that, since the death of my brother, all income has ceased. But it is so. My two sisters have only me to look up to, and they must not look in vain. To them, I must now supply the place of father, mother and brother. God giving me strength.'"

"Noble girl," I could not help ejaculating.

My narrator proceeded—

"I could not but utter my warm approval of her generous purpose. To my question what she purposed doing, she replied—

"'I have been well educated, and feel myself competent to undertake a school.'

"'A good school is much needed in the village,' I answered, 'and if you are ready to assume the task of instructor, I am sure you will be amply sustained.'

"'For the sake of my sisters, I am ready to do any work within my ability to perform. They must not, they shall not look to me in vain.'

"'And they will not, I am sure,' I said, in a voice of encouragement. 'Leave this whole matter to me. I will see a number of my friends, and introduce the subject.'

"Jessie left me with a beautiful light in her pensive face. To me, she had never looked so lovely. Dear girl! She seemed to have nestled into my very heart like a frightened bird. There was no difficulty in the way of getting up the school. In two weeks she opened with fifteen scholars, and has ever since had her rooms full."

"And does she give satisfaction?" I asked.

"Perfect satisfaction. There isn't a child under her care who does not love her, nor a parent whose little ones are with her, who does not feel it as a privilege. We couldn't do without her in Hawthorne, Kate. Her loss would be a calamity."

"How like a crushing hand to a sweet flower is the pressure of adversity upon a true spirit," said I.

"Yes," returned my friend, "it brings out the rich odor that lies hidden in its heart."

"It does, it does! How like the odor of a crushed flower, must be the exquisite perfume of Jessie's new life. I must see her; I must know her again. We must be friends as of old, but closer and dearer friends."

A few evenings afterward I met Jessie Morris. My friend invited a little company to honor my visit to Hawthorne, and among those who came was the subject of this little sketch. I was prepared for a change. But it was greater than I had expected. At first I was half in doubt as to her identity. While I was talking with an old acquaintance, a delicately formed girl entered, and with exquisite grace of movement crossed the room to where the lady hostess of the evening sat. She was simply attired, and her light brown hair was plainly parted above her pure white forehead. There was not a single ornament on her person, and yet you did not feel that anything was wanting. But her face! I used to think her beautiful. When I had last seen her, there was a brilliancy about her that dazzled. Now she was before me a very impersonation of loveliness; chaste, classic, pure, yet warm with intelligence and love. I felt my pulses bound, and my eyes moisten; for the cause of this great change was vividly present to my mind. She stood before me a being purified in the

fires of affliction, and I could not, at the moment, banish the thought of all she had borne and suffered.

But, soon, I forgot all in the delight of a sweet and elevating communion of thought and feeling that followed our renewed acquaintance. I found that Jessie had indeed new views and new affections. Touch her where you would, there was nothing rough nor pointed. To do good, and to communicate in a loving, honest spirit, seemed to be her very life. When she spoke of affliction, and then her voice was low, intense, and exquisitely impressive and musical, she pictured it as a purifying trial—a blessing rather than a curse.

In a word, she seemed the very opposite of what she was when I last saw her. Many hours did I pass in her society while I remained in Hawthorne, and their impression upon me can never be effaced. I trust that, when I left, the odor of that crushed flower lingered in the garments of my spirit. It must be so, for I have had better purposes since, and a more earnest desire to seek rather the good of others than my own pleasure.

Sweet Jessie Morris! Adversity has not really hurt thee. It has only revealed thy inner and true life, and made thy beauty like the beauty of angels. Thou art a form of goodness! Would that there were more in the world like thee!

POOR JOHNNY.

BY MRS. ANN S. STEPHENS.

"Suffer little children to come unto me, for of such is the kingdom of Heaven!"

About half an hour's ride from the thickly settled portions of New York, is one of the most beautiful little islands that you ever set eyes upon. Just where the banks of the East River are the most broken and picturesque on the main bottom shore, and the sunny slopes of Long Island are most verdant in their arcadian beauty, the river opens its bright waters, and Blackwell's Island rises, green, verdant, and beautiful from its azure bosom. Beautiful, even now, is that island; but it was more so. years ago, when its hollows were fragrant with wild roses, haunted with black-birds and thrushes; when its shores were hedged in with the snow-white dog-wood, wild cherry and maple trees, joined together with scarlet ivy and a thousand clinging vines, that even now hang along its shores, like torn banners left on a battle field. Then, the island must have seemed a mile's length of Paradise chopped into the waters—but now, alas, Blackwell's Island has other inhabitants than the singing birds, and the sweet wild blossoms. Its extremities are burdened, and crushed down, as it were, to the very water's edge, with an edifice of massive stone, while human crime and human misery are crowded together in masses appalling to reflect upon.

On one end of the island, naturally so quiet and beautiful, rises the rugged walls of the Penitentiary, flanked by out-houses, hospitals, and offices, every stone of which is eloquent of human degradation. Here, a thousand wretched beings, bowed with misery and branded with crime, are crowded together. All the day long, herds of these degraded beings may be seen in their coarse and faded uniform, burrowing in the earth, blasting and shaping the rocks that are to form new prison walls, and filling the sweet air with groans and curses which once thrilled only to the Summer-bird songs.

At the other extremity of the island stands the Insane Asylum, a beautiful pile, towering proudly over a scene of misery that is enough to make the heart humble with awe and sympathy. From its grated windows you may hear every sound, horrid or pathetic, in which the insane mind expresses its ravings. At one window is a wild face peering through the bars, and looking wistfully at the passer by with eyes full of entreaty, and the wan hand waving fainter and fainter as the wild gesture is unheeded; from another shrieks ring out upon the water, as the poor maniac calls for his mother to come out from the woods—a beautiful grove that rises afar off on the Long Island shore.

"Mother—mother, come, come, I have waited—I have pleaded—I have prayed for you to come. Mother! mother!"

This is the daily cry of a poor German boy. The fisherman hears it as he glides by the walls of that gloomy mad-house, and lifts his oar with a sort of terror, as if his own freedom were a mockery to the poor creatures blocked in by those massive and iron-girt walls from the sweet sunny air—the passengers that float by in our palace steamboats sometimes hear a wild shout, rising even above the noise of the engine, and see an arm thrust wildly through the iron bars of the window where this boy is confined—and in the still night, that cry of "mother, mother, come," rings over the woods; and dies in plaintive murmurs amid the roar and turmoil of "Hell Gate."

Other sounds there are issuing from that dismal dwelling—curses that chill the blood—pleadings that might melt a heart of stone—wild, riotous laughter, and wit, often more keen and satirical than springs from the most brilliant intellect. Besides all this amount of living misery, every association, painful or horrid, seems crowded on this beautiful spot—there is a little mound scarcely a stone's throw from the water, and surmounted by a motley trimmed apple tree, that looks like some pretty hillock, left by the gardener as a pleasant object to greet the poor maniac as he gazes from the window of his cell. Quiet and verdant it seems, with the calm sunshine sleeping on it, and the shadow of the slender tree pencilled delicately on the sward, as if nothing less beautiful had ever touched its surface. Yet that is the gallows tree! Under its young boughs year after year, was the fatal timbers reared from which one human soul after another was rudely thrust into eternity. That soft grass, so bright and beautiful, has been trodden over and over by the executioner. Those young boughs have trembled to the death-agony of many a wretched convict Legally murdered, amid the shouts, the sneers, the horror of his fellow men—and yet the scene from that tree is so beautiful, the blue expanse of the river sweep around one broad mirror of sunshine and water. The shores all around are indented into fairy promontories, and rise in the most beautiful slopes that ever gave birth to a world of wild flowers. Close by, the waters of "Hell Gate" toss up their foam, and sparkle in the sunshine, and in the purple distance sleeps many a scene of rural loveliness that is more than arcadian in its rural beauty. Yet with all this beauty slumbering around, there stood the gallows tree—there looms the Insane Asylum, and there the black Penitentiary is sequestered like some loathsome monster

upon the spot which was not many years since a perfect jungle of sweet briar and swamp roses.

Am I wrong then in saying that on this little slip of earth is kneaded together more of human wretchedness than can be found in the same space throughout the length and breadth of our land. The moment your foot touches the shore you feel oppressed with the crowd of feelings that seem inexplicable—pity, horror, and a painful blending of both crowd upon the heart with every breath you draw. Nothing but the air seems free; nothing but the blue sky above seems pure, as you walk from one scene of distress to another. You feel the more oppressed because human effort seems so powerless to alleviate the misery you witness. All that humanity can accomplish; all that sympathy can do to alleviate distress, is already extended by those who are entrusted to regulate the charities of a great city—but what can minister to a mind diseased? What can take away the deformity and the sting of guilt? Where lies the power to lift pauperism from the degradation that the haughty and evil spirit of man has flung around it? The very heart grows faint as it beats in this wilderness of woe, and finds no fitting answer to questions like these.

But there is still one remnant of beautiful nature left on Blackwell's Island—one spot where the flowers are yet left to bloom in the pure breath of Heaven—where the trees are yet rooted to the earth, and filled, as of old, with the music of Summer birds. On the very centre of the island is an old mansion house, formerly the residence of its proprietor before the paradise became city property. It is a rambling old building, with wings of unequal length, shaded with some magnificent old willows, and surrounded by shrubberies, pretty lawns, shaded with fine old trees; terraces, beautifully lifted from the water's edge; and gravel walks, with here and there a grape arbor flung over them, and bordered with some of the thickest and heaviest box to be found within ten miles around. A neglected and rude old place it is, but perhaps the more lovely for that. Neglect only seems to add to the wild luxuriance of every thing around, the hedges and rose thickets are tangled together. Great snow-ball trees,—trumpet vines, and honeysuckles seem to shoot out more vigorously from want of pruning, and the trees have become dressed in the majesty of their age.

You can stand in the old hall and see the river on either hand sparkling through the spreading branches—now and then a snow white sail glides by, and at sunset the water seems heaving up waves of gold wherever your eye is turned.

This is the Children's Hospital. In the low chambers, and the fine old fashioned rooms, from a hundred and fifty to two hundred children lie upon their little cots, in all the stages of suffering to which infancy is subject. Oh, it is a mournful sight,—those helpless little creatures, orphaned, or worse than orphaned, in the morning of life. Their wasted features wearing such looks of pain, and yet so pliant. God help them!

The physician in this hospital is a relative of my own, and many a heart ache has it given me to watch the brightening of those little faces, as he or the good matron pass into the wards, ministering to their comfort; poor things, by a kind look and soothing word, where medicine might often less avail. Strange manifestations of character have I witnessed among those little creatures—fortitude, that might have shamed a warrior—patience, the most saint-like; and again, but why should I dwell upon the evil that sometimes exhibits itself, full grown, in the heart of an infant? But there was one little child, whose history, simple as it is, yet to me, full of touching interest, I am about to relate There is no romance in it—nothing to excite, but still I think the reader will not turn away from what I have to tell of poor little Johnny, without a feeling of sympathy, a sigh, perhaps a tear. I shed more than one when they told me that his little coffin rested among the dead heaped together in Potter's Field.

We had gone up to spend an afternoon with my relatives, and were sitting out upon the piazza that runs along the front of the hospital, enjoying the delicious fragrance that come up from the shrubberies, and speaking, now and then, a word to a group of little crippled children that were lying around the steps, when the commissioners' boat, from the Alms House, at Bellevue, came in sight, with two or three of the young physicians of that institution on board. They landed, and came through the grounds, one of them bearing a mop of red flannel and grey fustian in his arms, amid which a pale hand falling over the doctor's shoulder, and a thin little face, resting upon his bosom was just discernible. As the group passed us and entered the hall, the child's head was fully lifted, and he turned upon us a face so meek, and yet beaming with vivid intelligence, that it made the heart thrill painfully to look on him.

His dress was of the coarsest kind, neglected, and even squalid. A red flannel under garment, which had belonged to some full grown man, was huddled about him in coarse folds, and fastened to his thin waist by a nether garment, also much too large—but the legs were rolled up in a soiled mop, through which his thin ancles and torn shoes protruded, and the long red sleeves were folded back to the shoulder over his long and deathly white arms. I had often seen sick children carried into the hospital before, and never without a thrill of pain, but there was something about this child so singular, that I could not cast him from my mind—his face had all the intelligence of an old man's, worn out in struggle with the evils of life Yet there was something saint-like and holy in the large eyes, that the heart could feel, though the pen would altogether fail in conveying an idea of it.

After a time, I went up to see the little stranger. He had been put in a bath, and his rags displaced by clean and wholesome garments. The thin, golden hair was combed back from his forehead, and altogether, he had a look of cleanliness and comfort that had something cheering in it. He seemed to feel the genial effect of this change, for his large eyes had brightened somewhat, and on his hollow cheek lay a faint tinge of red. The child was not handsome, perhaps had never been so in health—but the heart

yearned toward him with a feeling holier a thousand times than infantine beauty could excite.

I sat down by the child, who had seated himself on a stool, near the foot of his cot, and taking his little hand, asked if he were ill.

"A little," he said, in a voice that corresponded with his meek face.

"What is the matter—have you been ill long?"

"Yes, a little ill—nothing very bad though—my back is burned a good deal, but it will be well soon, now that I am here, and everybody so kind."

He turned his eyes from the comfortable and clean cot to my face, and then dropped them to his hands that were clasped and resting on his knees.

"What is your name?"

"John—but my mother and aunty call me Johnny."

"Then you have a mother?"

"Yes!"

His eyes drooped down, and his fallen voice was still more faint. I saw that there was something wrong; some thought at the child's heart which it would pain him to drag forth. I would not question him further, but proceed to say a few encouraging words to him, and was about to leave the room, but the boy turned his eyes upon me as if he had something to say, so I went back.

"Is there anything I can do for you, Johnny. I am going home now, but shall come up again soon—shall I bring you some oranges, or apples, or cake?"

He lay still, and kept his eyes down, and I saw, that unlike any child I had seen there before, he did not seem elated with the offer of these dainties—he hesitated; moved on his stool; said he thanked me very much indeed, but did I live in New York?

"Yes!"

"Well, then, if it would not be too much trouble—if I would just as lief do it as to give him the apples—would I go and see his mother, and tell her how comfortable he was, and that he wanted to see her very much—and aunty, too, he would like to see them both—would I go?—his aunty had brought him to Bellevue four days ago, but she might not have heard about his coming up here, and so it would be a long time before they found him, would I be so kind?"

"Would I be so kind?" had that child asked me to walk fifty miles with that voice, and those pleading eyes, I could not have denied him. So taking his mother's address I gave the promise.

"Tell her that I want very much to see her by Wednesday—if you please, ma'am, I don't feel as if I could wait longer than Wednesday!"

"She will come—I will tell her all, and perhaps come with her," I said, fully resolved that the sick child should have his wish.

Well, I returned home with my thoughts full of this pauper child—this little sick child with his lips all parched, and his eyes kindled with a death glow, who could ask a sight of his mother instead of the grateful fruit that even healthy children will sacrifice so much for! His mother, too!—I was curious to see the mother of this singular child, surely she must be something superior—an intelligent and feeble woman broken down by misfortune, and at last compelled to separate from her offspring. These thoughts were in my mind the last thing as I went to sleep that night.

It wanted two days of Wednesday, and I went in search of Johnny's mother. I had the address in one of those streets where misery pays a high price for the privilege of existing, and after finding my way up two flights of dirty stairs to the attic, I found a passage through sundry wood-tubs, half full of dirty water, two or three unwashed kettles and a broken stove that furnished the outer garret—and knocked at a rickety door, through which the sound of a low, faggy sort of voice came, as if some one were muttering to himself within. The voice was lifted in answer to my knock, and I entered a little hole of a room containing a pile of rags in one corner, a broken table, on which was a bottle, a tea-cup and some fragments of "cold victuals," on a dilapidated old chest sat a bloated, slip-shod woman, seemingly with no garment on but a ragged gown and more than half intoxicated, though it was quite early in the morning A little boy of three years old, perhaps, sat near the fire-place almost without clothes, and playing with some dirty shavings that littered the hearth.

Could this woman be the mother of little Johnny—that meek and sweet faced child? I could hardly ask the question—yet so it was! When I told her of the child, and gave his simple message, she got up from the chest and began curtesying to the ground over and over again, mumbling out her thanks that the "likes of me" should come to see her, and adding a series of disgusting and half intelligible excuses for the state of her room and dress.

To my inquiries if she would go to see her sick child on the following Wednesday, she gave me to understand that she thought a great deal of Johnny—that she would like to see him of all things, only she had no money to pay for a ride in the stage, and no time to wash her dress; then she fell to weeping, and I left her in a fit of maudlin lamentations over the evils of her fate, which terminated as I went out in a burst of those vulgar blessings that are so revolting in the mouths of the vile—all because I had promised to pay her stage fare, and supply her with a clean dress if she would promise to be in condition to go and see her child on Wednesday.

And this was the mother of little Johnny! this woman—so vile, so utterly debased! Her inebriate kisses had warmed his infancy. In her loathsome bosom that pale child had slept. I went home heart sick and shocked beyond measure; poor little Johnny—he had now become more than ever an object of compassion. What a heart he must have thus to pine for the sight of a mother like that! I could now understand the blush that lay on that poor cheek, and the faltering of his voice when she was mentioned. He was ashamed of the drunken mother that he loved so much

On Wednesday I sent early, to know if the woman was ready to visit her dying child. She was so intoxicated that it was impossible to obtain a definite answer from her.

I went up to the hospital alone. Johnny was sitting out by the piazza, crouched all in a heap, with the sunshine falling brightly around him; his fine eye

lighted up when he saw me, and his face beamed with the most beautiful smile I ever saw; he looked eagerly down the walk as if expecting some one to follow me.

"She could not come, my child," I said, answering the look: "your mother was not well!"

He fixed those large, earnest eyes on me for a moment. Then they drooped to the earth, and I could see tears swelling under the lids.

"She will come very soon though," I said, filled with pity for his disappointment, and perpetrating an harmless fraud, I gave him a couple of oranges as if from her. His face brightened. He took the oranges, held them a few minutes, and then crept round a wing of the building where a couple of little hunch-backed cripples were standing, and gave one to each.

"I don't care so very much for oranges," he said, coming back with a smile on his lips, and crouching down on the turf again; "and no one ever brings *them* anything. They are orphans, you know."

"Doctor," said Johnny, that day, as my brother was passing through the ward, "have you some paper and a pen and ink, I should like very much to write a letter to my mother." This was a singular request from a child of eight years old, and it quite startled the doctor—but he ordered the writing materials for the boy, and offered to have a table sent, but he drew a stool up to his cot, and turning a tin pan bottom up on the bed, began his letter on that.

It was a touching epistle, well written, and pathetic in its manifestation of earnest affection. He spoke of his comforts, of the care and kindness extended to him, and begged her to come very, *very* soon. He should watch for her now every day—she need not wait till she had money to buy something for him, he did not care for that, all he wanted was to see her. During the whole week that woman was never sober enough to read or understand the purport of this pleading letter.

Johnny was in a consumption. The doctor told me this on my next visit; and, as the burn on his ack healed, the hectic fever and racking cough grew worse. For a little time, while the Autumn sunshine was warm and golden, the poor little fellow might be found in the open air with his shadowy limbs gathered under him, and that sad, patient smile forever on his lips. He never complained, and yet never spoke of getting well. Everything given him was received with thankfulness: every little attention acknowledged with a smile so sweet, and patient enough to give a heart-ache to the most hardened. I never saw him that he did not ask for his mother.

"I have waited," he said, after weeks had gone by, and he was growing more feeble every day: "I have waited so long, expecting her every day, that sometimes I seem to get discouraged. Perhaps she is staying away because she has no money to buy things for me," he would say, "but she needn't wait for that. I don't care much for nice things! Besides, I haven't breath to eat them. Tell her this—tell her all I want in the wide world is to see her and aunty and Joseph."

I did tell her! Again and again I went to that squalid garret. I informed the woman that her child was dying, that a few weeks must end his life. I urged, entreated, persuaded—but always to a brain so clouded with drink that it seemed incapable of remembering for ten minutes anything I might say. She promised to be ready each time, but never kept her promise, or seemed to remember that she had made one. At length, when the boy was so feeble that he was obliged to be brought from the wards in the arms of his nurse, and was still pleading for a sight of his wretched parent; I resolved to make one more effort. So very early in the morning I sent the woman word not to go out, for at ten I should call for her, with a clean dress which she was to wear on a visit to her child.

I went at ten: but scarcely reached the garret when the sound of voices joining in a riotous song met my ear. Through the chinks of the door, and over the litter of pails, brooms and kettles came the unseemly sound; and most hateful of all was the thickened tones of that mother rising coarse and loud above the others. I opened the door, and there around a bottle of some kind of spirits, a tin dipper, two teacups and a broken sugar-bowl, sat three women. All of them were more or less inebriated, and in the full tide of their horrible enjoyment. The song was hushed as I entered. The woman that I came to seek arose—her face flushed, her eyes heavy, and staggered toward me.

I shrank from the wretch with loathing, and forgetting the absurdity of resentment with a creature so lost—spoke severely to her.

"Why! I am ready. I have been at home waiting all the time. I'm ready! give me the dress," she said, holding herself up by the table.

"You are in no situation to visit a dying child," I said. "You have been drinking."

"Is it me that has been drinking?" cried the wretch, making an effort to conceal the bottle under the ragged folds of her dress. "Me, indeed; there is sister can tell you that not a blessed drop has passed my lips this morning—drinking indeed!"

"She is in no condition to go," said the woman to whom this appeal was made, and who seemed a few degrees more respectable than herself. "But if you will pay the stage fare I would go and see the poor, dear child."

The woman shed a few tears that seemed to be natural: and so transferring the clean dress, and a more tidy bonnet and shawl to her person, I prepared to take away the woman whom Johnny called "aunty," instead of his degraded mother.

All this time the little boy had been crying piteously in a corner of the room, protesting that some one was going to take his mother to prison, and looking the very picture of infantile misery. This was Johnny's brother; so after procuring some decent clothes, in which the little fellow really looked very well—and arming him with a big orange and a large apple—the aunt and brother were fairly started for Blackwell's Island.

When I reached the hospital, there was little Johnny sitting on the steps, where the pleasant Autumn sun was shining—nestled close to his aunt and sheltered by her shawl. His eyes were bright as diamonds, and the smile that beamed over his wan face like that of an angel. Still you could see that he was on the very

brink of the grave; his breath came with a painful quiver at every word; and his pale lips were even now tinged with the hue of death His head was upon his aunt's lap: and at his feet sat the little brother, holding the orange in his hands, and looking *so* cheerful and healthy. The contrast was enough to thrill the hardest heart with pain.

I sat down behind the group and listened to what passed, for Johnny was talking, and his sweet, feeble voice fell like a plaintive lute-strain on my spirit.

"Aunty—dear aunty," he was saying, "tell her how much I think of her: how I dream of her at night, and watch for her all the day long. Tell her this, will you, aunty?—but let her be clean like you, and—and—" here his voice sank to a whisper—"oh, beg her not to drink anything for that one day. I think that I should die that minute if she came here among all these sick children. You know how, aunty—this—this is one reason why I won't to see her so much. If she could only know how short of breath I am—and—how the fever burns me at night—if she could feel my hot hands, and know as well as I do what is coming next. I am sure—oh, quite sure that she would never drink again. I must see her—oh, aunty, aunty, dear—I must, must see her. She did not drink so when father went to Heaven; and if I should go there, oh, aunty, I could not tell him about her! as she is now!"

The child lifted his head as he uttered these words, a faint color rose in one cheek, and the other was white as marble. In my life I never saw eyes so vividly bright, they absolutely burned with holy inspira ion. I arose and went away, the scene had become too painfu..

The next time I saw the child he was lying on his little cot gasping for breath, and almost speechless. Yet the poor fellow smiled, and thanking me, said—"that he did not suffer so very much." He cast a wishful look through the door as I came in, which I could understand too well. This was the last time poor Johnny ever asked for his mother. When I inquired for him the next time, the doctor pointed to his empty cot, and his eyes were wet as well as mine.

THE RETURN FROM MEXICO

"They return—they return—
They return no more!"

War is always terrible! Its depopulated fields, its slaughtered thousands, and its demoralizing tendencies, render it, even in the justest cause, a thing for humanity to weep over.

This nation has just emerged from a contest in which victory has everywhere attended its arms. A part of those who were actively engaged in it, we have just seen returning to their homes, honorably discharged from service. Of these, some bring back the reputation of heroic deeds, such as would not disgrace the brightest page of history. Others arrive, however, disfigured, or maimed for life. But how many have never returned at all!

What a contrast between the return of the living and dead! The one comes back, with brows wreathed with victory, and steps attended by military pomp; but the other is brought home in sadness, in silence, in tears. Each has fought with equal bravery, yet how dissimilar the result! We might record the names of a host who have returned with elevated rank and high military reputations; but what a crowd of the illustrious dead we should have to place in the balance against them. There was Vinton, the accomplished gentleman, the sincere Christian—there was Ringgold, the Bayard of the army—there was Garland, and Twiggs, and Graham, and Scott, and a hundred others. But, contenting ourselves with the simple tale of one of those who fell, we shall leave the imagination of our readers to supply the story of the rest.

C—— was an only son, and the last male scion of his house. High-spirited, generous, and in all things noble, he was the stay and hope of his surviving parent. At the proper age he was placed in the Academy of West Point, for his ancestors had been soldiers in the Revolution, and his earliest dream of ambition been to make himself worthy of their name. He grew up, in this institution, the pride of his class. Athletic in frame, and vigorous in intellect, he excelled alike in manly exercises as in a scholar's acquirements. He graduated in 18—, and was brevetted a lieutenant.

His command was one that allowed him to be much at home, and here he met his cousin, an orphan girl, to whom his father had given a home. Amiable, accomplished and beautiful, she unconsciously won his affections, as he did hers, and their mutual love was blessed by the aged parent. The young soldier's cup of happiness was already filled to the brim, when the war with Mexico began, and he was ordered, with his regiment, to the seat of hostilities. He was to have been married in a few months; but now all this was suspended. Still he was full of eager anticipations of the future. Oh! little did he know his fate.

Who shall describe the eagerness with which his betrothed bride, and his gray-haired sire now watched for intelligence from the seat of war? Who shall picture the agony of suspense with which they waited for the lists of killed and dangerously wounded after every general action, or the breathless terror with which they hurried from name to name, fearing every moment to find his. The rejoicing crowd, whose huzzas shook the streets outside, little dreamed of what was going on in that old mansion. Several battles had now occurred, and he was still unharmed, so that, at last, their fears grew less poignant. The war, too, was thought to be nearly over, and they began to speculate on his probable speedy return. Suddenly, with the news of a great victory, came intelligence of his death.

He had fallen, indeed, at the head of his column—but what solace was this to his broken-hearted family! He had died with heroic words upon his lips—but could this reanimate his lifeless clay now? One wild shriek burst from his affianced bride, as she read the awful intelligence, and then she fell fainting to the floor. The emotion of his parent, though less violently exhibited, was not less fearful. The hope of his declining years, the only child of his sainted wife, the last representative of his ancient line, was no more: and, as the thought came over his memory, he groaned in bitterness, and, with Job, wished he had never been born.

They had talked of the return of their young hero —well, he came—but in how different a guise from what they had expected! He came with no prancing

steed, amid the brilliant panoply of war; but borne in his coffin, he entered his father's house for the last time. The sound of the dead march attended him, and not the bold triumphal music they had looked for: and tears, instead of smiles, met him at the threshold.

They laid him in the old wainscotted chamber, the same room where his grandsire, with his sword across him, had lain in state: and crowds poured in from the broad street to gaze on the dead man's face, and see the honorable wound by which he had fallen. But oh! what solace was all this to the crushed hearts that sat desolate in the neighboring apartment.

As evening drew on the crowds departed, and the bereaved were left to weep alone. Then only did they enter that old hall to indulge their grief. His affianced bride flung herself at the foot of the coffin, which shook under her convulsive sorrow. His sire buried his face, in like manner, at the head. And the soldier's favorite dog cowered by his side, expressing, by that attitude, his grief.

The hour of agony that ensued passes our power to tell. But the mourners had one comfort amid their sorrow—like the lamented Vinton, he, for whom they wept, had died a Christian. This thought, at last, brought consolation, and enabled his sire to say, as he clasped his aged hands, and looked up, with streaming eyes, to heaven,

"The Lord hath given, and the Lord hath taken away—blessed be the name of the Lord!"

REVERSES IN REAL LIFE.

BY HARDIE P. CHAMPLIN.

HAPPY Nest is the quaint term with which sister Lucia honors our humble dwelling. 'Tis truly a "happy nest" at present, though its inmates have "drank of sorrow's bitter cup"

The members of our family are five. A mild, loving mother, who moves silently about, with a peaceful smile resting upon her death-like countenance; good health is a stranger to her attenuated frame, yet she is cheerful, and encourages us all by her beautiful piety and firm reliance upon the goodness of our Heavenly Father.

Her eldest is a pale, quiet one, who is bereft of reason.

Viola is a sweet, energetic sister, who by her exertions comfortably supports the family, and bears the college expenses of a wild, harum-scarum boy, who has no particular qualifications to distinguish him from ordinary bipeds.

Lastly, and least of the birds in this nest, is our lovely little Lucia, who flutters gaily along life's pathway with a dimple in each rosy cheek, and a sparkle in her eyes, which brighten at sound of mirth and overflow in sympathy with another's woe.

Viola is a factory girl. She has received a liberal education, but finding that she could earn more by labor in the factory than teaching, she cheerfully passes twelve hours each day in a dingy, noisy apartment, in attending her loom. I have petitioned earnestly to be permitted to leave the. university, and bear a portion at least of the duties which her generous self-sacrificing nature has imposed upon her, but she steadfastly refuses my prayer, and with a cheerful smile says that it is a source of delight to her to be enabled to be of use to those she loves so dearly.

Sweet sister! God will reward your unselfish excellence!

I long for the time to come when I can substantially repay your more than sisterly kindness. A heart overflowing with gratitude is now devoted to contribute to your happiness.

We were once the children of prosperity. Our father possessed much more than a competence, and was able to lavish the luxuries of life upon his family. By a series of misfortunes (which it is unnecessary to detail) he lost all, with the exception of our present home; he was so afflicted by care and anxiety for his losses, that he was seized with a brain fever, which terminated fatally. Sorrowfully we followed our good, beloved parent to the grave—

> "To pay the last sad duties, and to hear
> Upon the silent dwelling's narrow lid
> The first earth thrown."

These trials pressed severely upon our delicate mother, who fell into a decline, and for months Viola watched by her sick bed with anxious solicitude.

Six years have passed since that trying time. Her health is improved. She saves her strength during the day that she may be able to welcome home the dear laborer at night.

Lucia is a tidy young housekeeper; she has always a delicious supper of bread and milk, of which we partake. Our mother asks such beautiful blessings, it seems as if a Heavenly spirit presided at our happy evening meal.

Poor darkened Mary bows her head at the family altar in mute imitation of the rest. She is but twenty-eight, yet her head is silvered as with the frosts of eighty winters. It is now ten years since a mournful tragedy was enacted, which ended in the overthrow of her reason.

At eighteen Mary was exceedingly beautiful, and a reigning belle. Among her admirers was one to whom nature and fortune had been very bountiful. Everett Earle passionately loved Mary, and she was not indifferent toward him. He was of grave, retiring manners, and a casual observer would scarce have suspected that under a calm demeanor there flowed a current of strong, impetuous feeling: yet most unhappily for that nobly gifted youth it was so! Mary, at times, half avowed the deep esteem which she felt for him; then again she would turn from his delightful conversation, and listen to the empty prattle of numerous frivolous butterflies, by which she was usually surrounded.

Young Earle became weary of this tantalizing game, and resolved to have an understanding. He requested a private interview, which was granted. Mary received him with a gay, saucy smile, and to his earnest protestations made light, unfeeling replies, and assured him that his pointed attentions were very tiresome; an uncontrollable smile of affection played about her mouth as she said these words. The unhappy man saw none of these favorable "signs;" an expression of deepest gloom shaded his countenance; a bitter look of disappointment shot from his fine hazel eyes. He listened without reply for some moments to her trifling conversation, which she continued, poor blind one, unconscious of the deep agony she was inflicting. Suddenly he arose, snatched her hand, and pressed a burning kiss upon it; then hurried precipitately from her presence. She caught a glimpse of his convulsed features; a remorseful conviction of the culpability of her trifling rushed over her. She sprang to the door in an ecstacy of grief and repentance, with the intention of recalling him. Too late, he was gone, with a heavy heart she returned to her seat and wept bitterly a long while. Being of an impulsive nature, she comforted herself with the reflection that the morrow would see him as devoted as ever by her side, when she would make reparation.

She was aroused from her reverie by the rustling of the rose-bushes against the window. She heard the voice of her lover, utter in despairing tones, his last words, "farewell, Mary, my first, my only love. I have placed my hopes of future happiness upon thee, my heart's best treasure; they are blasted, nothing but the grave for me." The poor stricken girl darted to the window. It was a moonlight eve; she saw her lover standing very near the window. Slowly he raised his right hand, which grasped a murderous pistol. He pressed it against his temple. In vain she strove to speak; with weak, trembling hands she clung motionless to the window seat, and in deadly terror watched his motions. A flash, a report, the fine features of that unhappy youth were convulsed by the strivings of the spirit in breaking its earthly bonds.

With flying feet Mary darted to the garden, in advance of our parents and a crowd of domestics, who were alarmed by the report, and her wild scream of agony. She reached the spot; life was extinct. He lay extended in all the perfection of manly beauty. A shower of rose-leaves were silently spreading themselves around him like a beautiful winding sheet. With a fearful cry she threw herself beside him. His pale face was upturned; a ghastly wound stared with dreadful distinctness upon the horrified spectators. Mary kissed his blood-stained lips; twined her fingers in his ringlets till they were dabbled with gore. Her tear-drops glittered like brilliants among his hair. In words of tenderest import she besought him to live—to live but for her sake. She shrieked, she raved, she denounced herself as an unpardonable murderess. She was with difficulty torn from the inanimate form so insensible to her endearing caresses.

It was necessary to hold her by force for hours to restrain her from self-destruction. Tired nature at length gave way, and she sank into a deep, dreamless slumber, from which she awoke in perfect consciousness. In a concise manner she related her interview with young Earle the preceding evening, and dwelt at length upon the awful consequences of her sinful trifling; then her eyes flashed wildly. She tore the light cap from her head. Her rich hair fell in long, heavy masses around her person; but, oh! it was the driven snow! Intense agony had changed its hue from raven to

"White in a single night."

With maniacal strength she twisted large tresses of her hair and cast them furiously away. She called for water, and when the glass was held to her foaming lips, she bit pieces from the side. Alas! I *cannot* dwelt upon the heart-rending scene. No more peace—no more rest for her anguished spirit. The young man died through her means; she has fully expiated her unpremeditated crime, for since that morning the "light of reason has never illumined her darkened soul."

She is perfectly harmless now; and in summer daily weaves chaplets of flowers, with which she crowns the lonely grave of the suicide. She impatiently rejects white roses, for it was their leaves which bathed in perfume the dead form of young Earle. At the report of fire-arms a shiver convulses her slight frame; an expression of anguish distorts her features. She will close her eyes for some moments, and then with a sad, vacant smile caress and softly murmur to her beloved blossoms. Her severe retribution is an impressive warning to all who heartlessly, or through thoughtlessness trifle with the feelings of another.

Viola has had an opportunity of changing her condition. Mr. L——, a handsome and accomplished young gentleman of wealth and high respectability, whose admiration of the faithful disinterestedness of Viola, led him to renew an acquaintance which had commenced in her palmier days. His excellent principles and winning manners could not fail to please; yet it was in vain that he urged his suit. "He would supply her place to the family," he said: "he had wealth, it should be at her command." Viola was too proud-spirited to accept these generous proposals. In friendly terms, though with gentle firmness, she declined his offers, and studiously concealed her sentiments. Mr. L—— forebore to press his suit when he saw it gave her pain; and with a melancholy brow took his leave, attributing her rejection to indifference. I fear he was in the wrong. I dared not scrutinize too deeply the feelings she so carefully veiled; but for months she was so wan and pale that we feared she had sealed her own unhappiness. She was outwardly cheerful, and unrepiningly continued her daily toil. Now, thank God, she is herself again. The bloom of health and contentment has returned to her cheek; and the smile comes readily to her lip at the joyous sallies of our buoyant Lucia.

Viola lost a husband in Mr. L——, but gained a firm friend. He married a short time since. She often meets his proud young bride, and is able to return her patronizing nods with a serene smile. Viola found a blessed comforter in our mother, who mourned over the drooping form of her darling, and prayed her not to sacrifice her earthly happiness for any false considerations of duty.

A few words of our pet Lucia, and then we will withdraw from public view. There is a sparkling joyousness about our youngest which takes our hearts perforce. Her sweet, ringing voice is always heard warbling some simple song, as with airy steps she pursues her domestic avocations. May God direct our beautiful, and keep her in the correct path through this, her earthly pilgrimage.

SAVING AT THE SPIGGOT.

BY HARRY SUNDERLAND.

SINCE our removal into Spring Garden, my wife's old and very agreeable neighbor, Mrs. Henley, has only paid her one or two formal visits. Withdrawn from her sphere and influence, the mania for spending money which raged for a couple of years, has subsided, and my wife sees her error quite as clearly as I do, and laments it even more bitterly. She is exceedingly anxious to save at every point in order to make up what has been lost, and in attempting to do so, has, in several instances, demonstrated with great clearness the folly of the man who was charged with saving at the spiggot while he was letting out at the bung-hole.

We have usually employed one domestic to cook and do general housework, and hired a washerwoman and ironer every week. Our washings are pretty large—at least so my wife says, and she ought to know. After we moved into Spring Garden, my wife concluded to dispense with the ironer, and this saved sixty-two and a half cents a week. Of course she had to take her place, so our one servant had just about as much to do as she could get through with.

I expressed my objection to this, but my wife said that she would rather do it.

"But you are not strong, Anna," I urged, "and will find standing all day at the ironing-table much too fatiguing."

"I suppose I will be a little tired, but that is no matter. Getting tired won't hurt me."

"*Over* fatigue might, though," I returned.

"I will guard against that," she made answer.

"Still, Anna, I would rather pay the woman. You have enough to do in the family."

"A half, and eleven pence is a good deal to pay out every week, besides giving a woman a day's boarding, and might just as well be saved as not. So, Harry, you needn't say a word about it. I've made my mind up to do a share of the ironing, and you know very well, by this time, that if I will, I will, you may depend on't."

"And if you won't you won't, so there's an end on't," I returned, good humoredly. "Well, I suppose for me to object is useless; but I doubt if you save anything in the long run."

"Very well, doubt away, but *I* know, that if I save sixty or seventy cents a week. I will save thirty or thirty-five dollars a year. If I am not very smart at figures, I can at least calculate that."

Of course my wife had her way, and the very next week undertook to do half the ironing. When she got up on Tuesday morning, the ironing day, I saw by the expression of her face that she was not well.

"Does your head ache?" I asked.

"Yes, a little."

"More than a little, I apprehend, Anna. You do not look at all well. Of course you will not attempt ironing to-day."

"Certainly I will," she replied.

"You are very wrong, Anna. You might make yourself sick," I urged.

"Oh, no. I shall feel better after awhile. I told Hannah last week that I shouldn't want her any more. So I must do it, sick or well."

It was in July, and the day had opened breezeless and sultry. Even while sitting quite still at my desk, the perspiration was starting from every pore. About eleven o'clock, however, there was a change. The air began to move gently from the East, and by twelve was blowing freshly. The thermometer had already fallen several degrees. The change was delightful. New life seemed to rush through every vein.

At two o'clock I went home to dinner. By this time, the difference in the temperature since morning was at least twenty degrees. The sky was obscured by clouds, and the wind that was blowing steadily from the north east, penetrated my thin summer clothing, and actually produced a sensation of chilliness.

On arriving at home, I found my wife with flushed cheeks and a look of extreme fatigue, standing at the ironing-table, which was placed across the kitchen door, into which the cool wind was passing, and of course, striking full against her. She was dressed in a thin, loose wrapper, and her neck and a part of her bosom exposed to the cool air.

"Anna, you are very imprudent to stand in that draft, overheated as you are," I said, the moment I saw her.

"The air is delightful," she merely returned.

"But you will take cold," I urged.

"No danger. I'm not afraid."

"It might be the death of you. Not afraid to stand, in the overheated state in which you are, in a chilly east wind?"

"There—there, Harry!" my wife said a little impatiently. "Don't come here to worry me now. I'm so tired, that if it wasn't for this cool, bracing air, I couldn't stand."

"Are you almost done?" I asked.

"Yes, very nearly. It took that Hannah about all day to do what I have done this morning. I can iron two pieces to her one. I wouldn't have her again in the house."

I couldn't help thinking of the story I had heard about two laboring men, one an old hand at the business, and the other green. They were set to

work at some kind of excavation, and the new hand threw two shovels' full of earth to the old one's one; but in the long run, the old hand, who worked up to his strength, but without exhausting it, did twice the labor of the other. My inference, which proved to be correct, was, that Hannah did a fair and reasonable day's work, while my wife, working on the high pressure principle, did a great deal too much—double what she could have done working day after day.

"Ain't you going to eat anything?" I asked, at dinner time, finding that my wife declined being helped to any dish on the table.

"I don't feel the slightest appetite," she returned.

"Try a piece of this lamb," I urged. "It is very nice."

But she shook her head, saying—

"I couldn't swallow a morsel of it."

Of course I did not eat with much appetite. In fact I hardly tasted the food I put into my mouth.

"It's the last time *she* does the ironing," I said to myself, as I walked slowly back to the office where I was engaged in writing. "I call this poor economy. Ten chances to one if she don't make herself sick; and there won't be much saving in that."

As evening approached, and my thoughts began to turn toward home, I felt uneasy. I expected to find my wife suffering from entire physical prostration. My fears were not idle. The reality, indeed, was worse than my fears. She was in bed, and suffering from a severe pain in her side, that was so much increased by breathing that she could hardly help crying out at every inspiration. Coughing or pressure caused intolerable pain

Once before, my wife had been attacked with pleurisy, and I knew too well the alarming symptoms In her overheated state, the cold air had caused a sudden check of perspiration, and inflammation of the pleura was the consequence.

I started immediately for our family physician, and was fortunate enough to find him in. He accompanied me home. On arriving, we found that all the symptoms had become much worse since I left. My poor wife screamed with nearly every breath.

Bleeding was instantly resorted to, which gave temporary relief. But, before ten o'clock the pain returned with great violence. I again went for the doctor, who repeated the bleeding, and then ordered leeches, fifty of which were applied. But the pain only abated in a partial degree. All night she suffered most cruelly, and was so bad in the morning that I had to go for the doctor again soon after daylight.

More blood was then taken by the lancet, and fifty more leeches applied to the chest before relief was obtained. Then I had the satisfaction to see her sink away into sleep, the first time she had closed her eyes since the attack.

She slept for a couple of hours, and then awoke with a return of the pain in her side, to allay which leeching was again resorted to.

For five days this bleeding and leeching was kept up before the inflammation was sufficiently subdued to allow of revulsive treatment. Three large blisters were applied to her chest and arms.

It need hardly be said, that with such a disease and such treatment, my wife was reduced so low that a nurse had to be obtained for her. She was weak as an infant; for, added to the pain and the severe mode of attacking the disease resorted to by the physician, she took but little nourishment for many days. Nearly three weeks elapsed, from the time she was taken before she was well enough to come down stairs and take her usual place at the head of the table, and then she had so little strength left, that she could not do the most simple needle work. Months elapsed before her health was fairly restored—I will not say "fairly restored," either, for she has never been as she was.

And now let me calculate the amount of saving made by my wife in dispensing with a woman once a week to help do the ironing. The saving was exactly sixty-two and a half cents to a fraction. That was the creditor side of the account. The debtor side outbalanced it seriously, as far as the account was entered up, which never could be accurately done. Indeed no attempt to strike a clear balance was ever made.

The first and most imposing item was the doctor's bill, which was exactly twenty dollars. Then, five dollars were paid for leeching; and nine dollars to a nurse for three weeks' service. Here was thirty-four dollars of unmistakeable expense. Beyond this was the loss of nearly two months time by my wife, to make up for which a seamstress had to be employed for several weeks at half a dollar a day. Instead of being able to get along with one domestic and a washerwoman and ironer, two girls have had to be hired ever since. Taken all in all, it may be fairly concluded that for sixty-two and a half cents that my wife saved at the spiggot on the occasion referred to, she let seventy or eighty dollars escape from the bunghole.

As in duty bound, I made the circumstance the occasion of sundry appropriate hints. My wife saw her error plainly enough, and acknowledged it with expressions of regret for her folly; but many weeks did not elapse after she considered herself well enough to go about the house, before she suggested that one domestic would be enough in the family. But I vetoed the proposed reduction of help in such a determined manner, that I carried my point. Still the propensity to save a present half dollar at the risk of losing ten, is so strong, that if I did not constantly interfere, and almost command things to be done or left undone, we would suffer almost as much from my good wife's efforts to save as we did from her mania to spend, as related under the head of "Agreeable Neighbors."

THE SPANIARD'S REVENGE.

BY JOHN S. JENKINS.

About three leagues west of Cordova, in Moorish Spain, and on the northern bank of the Gaudalquiver, the main road to Seville is crossed by a small tributary stream, which, after plunging over many a tall rock, and dashing through many a dark chasm, among the frowning cliffs and deep ravines of the Sierra Morena, finds its way out into the smooth plains of Andalusia; and then, as if rejoicing, in very gladness of heart, at its escape from so much noise and bustle, it courses its way silently on across a wide, sandy bed, with pebbles of every shape and hue at the bottom, glistening and glancing ever so brightly in the sunlight; then further on, it almost loses itself amid the waving tussocks of grass that hang droopingly over its bosom; and then again, you hear it murmuring softly among the groves of acacia and sycamore. At some two hundred yards distance from the spot where the brook crosses the road, it sweeps around the base of a low hill or undulation, occupying, perhaps, twenty or thirty acres, and richly wooded with forest and fruit trees. Near the centre of the elevated ground, and in full view of the road, at the time to which the story relates, stood the country-house of Don Emanuel D'Allaya, formerly the most worthy corregidor of Cordova, but then retired from the cares of public life, rich in this world's goods, in vast stores of oil and wine, and flocks and herds without number; but blessed was he, more than all, in one fair daughter, his only child, whom, it were sooth to say, he loved "passing well."

A narrow, sandy carriage-way, skirted with dwarf brambles, led to the house, which was situated in the midst of a garden or grove, surrounded by a low parapet wall of dark brown stone. The gateway was partially overgrown with creepers of various kinds, whose long, delicate sprays were constantly dancing about whenever there was the least breeze to animate them; but within, the grounds presented the appearance of more careful thrift and management. The walks were tastefully arranged, and bordered with filbert and juniper bushes, with the arbutus and the crape myrtle. There were whole thickets of oranges and olives, arbors buried beneath the most luxuriant foliage, and, here and there, charming flower-beds, bright with the hues of the cactus, the rose of Japan, the clustering cistus, and red and white camelias. In the rear was a miniature forest of tall beeches and limes, with a gloomy cork tree occasionally interspersed among them, and, high above all, rose the tapering spires of the laurel. Beyond this, there stretched away, for long, long miles, an unbroken tract of country, to the very foot of the distant mountains, which lifted their heads to the clouds, crowned to the summit with cedar, ilex and pine.

The residence of Don Emanuel was of a mixed compound of Spanish and Moorish architecture. The main centre building was dark and sombre enough, but there had been a wing added on each side, of a more recent date, and more cheerful and elegant in appearance; and along the entire front there ran a light collonade, as airy and as graceful as fancy could have designed. The ceiling of the portico was ornamented with stucco-work, and curious designs in arabesque, and studded with glazed bricks, on which were graven the arms of the noble house of D'Allaya. The broad avenue or walk, in front of the house, was paved with tesselated stone, and as it approached the porch it was increased in width, so as completely to encircle a fountain of the purest white marble, with a statue of Ganymede in the centre of the basin, sculptured of the same material, and represented as pouring out what appeared to be an endless libation.

Upon a low stool of sandal wood, in one of the balconies jutting out from the eastern wing, well nigh toward sunset of a lovely day in the early summer, was seated the Donna Maria Dolores, daughter and sole heiress of Don Emanuel D'Allaya; while from the adjoining apartment, occupied by her maidens, came the merry clink of the castanet, and the sound of happy voices that denoted the happier hearts forgetting everything like care or sorrow in the excitement of the dance. She was habited in a rich dress of green silk, from the looms of Grenada, woven in damascene, and passemented with silver. The sleeves were looped back at the elbow with clasps of emerald. The boddice was closely fitted to the shape of the wearer, and displayed the beauties of

her finely developed form to advantage. Her dress was quite low in the neck, though not more so than the fashions of the day warranted; but the voluptuous fullness of her bust and shoulders was half concealed by a broad collar and ruff of Flemish lace. Her hair was smoothly braided, and secured by narrow bands of gold and purple tissue interwoven with natural flowers. A string of pearls encircled her neck, from which was suspended, by a gold chain, a small cross of amethyst.

The Donna Maria was most certainly a beauty, albeit her complexion was many shades darker than those of our fair Northern ladies. Though her cheek was tinged with a hue of brown, it was smooth and clear, and the warm blood shone through it, shaded and subdued in color, but bright and healthful. Her eyes were dark as night, beaming full of deep and earnest passion, and flashing back with interest the rays of the declining sun. Her lips were large, pouting and luscious; and her voice musical and soft. As she sat there in a reclining position, with her head gently resting on her soft hand, her form appeared to be more full than was compatible with elegance, or ease of movement, but it was, nevertheless, lithe and active. There were few among the high-born senoritas of the province, who moved with a more queenly gait, or swept along more gracefully in the proud step of the fandango.

At the feet of the lady were the harp and gittern, with which she had been amusing herself. Ballad after ballad of the olden time had she sang, and then, as if tired of recounting the chivalric deeds and lofty heroism of her race, she dwelt in sweeter accents upon some simple tale of love. But after awhile she had wearied of all, and sank into a musing mood. Her thoughts were neither sad nor unpleasant, for often would a blush crimson her cheek that was not evidence of shame or sorrow. And yet she would sigh deeply, and suffered the noise and merriment near her to pass unchecked and unheeded. It was very evident that she was in love. Still it could not be that she had given her heart unsought. Oh, no!—she would not have shamed her pride of lineage, her Castilian blood, so much as to be won unwooed. It was scarce a twelvemonth since she had been riding homeward, with a few attendants, from the convent of the Holy Virgin, just without the walls of the city, when a wounded bird, after fluttering uneasily for a few seconds over her head, fell dead upon her bosom, its warm blood dyeing her white stomacher, and trickling down over her velvet riding-dress, and the gay trappings of the Andalusia poney on which she was mounted To catch the poor stricken innocent in her hands and give utterance to her sympathy was in her woman's nature; and it was never known how many a bitter malediction she might have pronounced against the cruel murderer; for as she raised her tearful eyes they met the gaze of a young cavalier who had at that moment sprang from the thicket, and stood bowing before her with his broad-leafed sombrero in his hand, and his glossy raven hair falling in masses over a face delicately shaded by his well trimmed beard and curling mustachio.

He was in the early prime of manhood; he was neither tall, nor short, but of the middle height; and his frame was firmly and compactly built. His carbine was slung over his shoulder by an embroidered belt of chamois leather, and at his side he wore a long, sharp-pointed hunting-knife, similar in many respects to, but much broader than, the ordinay Spanish couteau de-chasse. The first thought of the Donna Maria as she looked upon him, clad though he was in a hunting tunic of murrey colored cloth of Cuenca, tightened at the waist, and descending to the tops of his Cordova boots, which bore the stains of long and dusty travel, was that he seemed most comely in person; and when he addressed her in deep, low tones, but eloquent and full of feeling, her heart began to beat quite anxiously, notwithstanding her efforts to appear unconcerned.

"A thousand pardons, fair senora," said he, "if I have frightened you!"

"Ah! Senor Caballero, it was indeed most cruel sport to deprive so innocent a thing of life."

"Nay, sweet lady, not half so cruel as that those bright eyes should look so frowningly; or that those rosy lips should utter such harsh rebuke."

The words were spoken half lightly and half in earnest, and though the language was not strange for that day, it brought a warm blush into the lady's countenance. The tone of her reply was softened, and they gradually engaged in conversation until he entreated and obtained permission to accompany her. His horse, which had been led by a servant while he pursued his search for game on foot, was now brought up. Grasping with one hand the cantle of his demi-pique, he vaulted lightly into the seat, and was soon laughing and chatting gaily with the Donna Maria as he rode at her side.

Don Alberto Nivada had barely attained to man's estate, and within a few months past had laid aside his students' cap and gown at the university of Henares, and entered into the possession of the large inheritance which had descended to him from an illustrious ancestry. Both his parents were dead, and he was then returning from a visit to some relatives at Seville. These facts were soon communicated to his companion, and one would have supposed from the ease and familiarity with which they afterward conversed, that they were old and devoted friends. Such they could not well be already, but it was not long before they became even more than that, for they were promised and affianced lovers. Don Alberto often came and went, and came again, but to find his betrothed more beautiful and winning, and more rejoiced to welcome him. The father smiled most kindly upon his children, as he was wont to call them, and all went on brightly and hopefully.

It may be granted then that it was none other than Don Alberto who caused the Donna Maria to sigh so deeply as we have said while seated on the balcony. She had been impatiently waiting his arrival ever since the mid-day, although she had no earthly reason to anticipate his coming until near nightfall. A slight frown was perceptibly gathering on her brow, and her delicate fingers were contracting as if under the influence of some powerful excitement, when all at once she sprang to her feet, a glad smile wreathed

her fine lip, and her bosom swelled as though she had that instant discovered some newer and dearer joy.

"Ah! it is he!—Alberto!" she exclaimed, as the cloud of dust which had attracted her attention rolled away, and disclosed the form of a mounted cavalier in a silken jerkin and embroidered cloak, with his long white plume floating in the breeze, and the precious stones on the hilt of his toledo glowing with sunbeams. He approached at a rapid rate, and she was soon folded in his arms. A servant almost immediately presented himself with some iced orange water in a crystal glass, and a silver basket filled with choice fruit and biscuit. After tasting the refreshments, Alberto seated himself by the side of his mistress; and thus they spent the evening hours by the light of the new moon and the smiling stars, talking as lovers always talk when blest as they were blest.

"And so, dear one," said he, as he rose to take leave for the night, and imprinted a kiss upon the cheek yet warm from its resting place on his bosom. "And so, dear one, the morrow shall bless our nuptials?"

"If the bishop of Cordova and the good saints so will it, Alberto."

"And we shall love each other always?"

"Always! Alberto."

"It is a holy and solemn rite that will unite us, not only so far as this world's interest and hopes are concerned, but in heart and in spirit now and forever. My heart's best and truest affection is thine, Maria, and it will cling to thee even beyond the grave; for that love would, indeed, be valueless which death could terminate."

The lady sighed, partly at the sad thought of the separation to which his words had reference, and partly, it may be feared, from perplexity and doubt as to what she could do to while away the tedious hours when no longer rejoicing in his presence. But she said nothing, and so they parted.

The morning saw them wedded. It was a bright, clear day, and joy and gladness beamed everywhere around them. There were troops of friends to wish them good cheer and happiness; the festive board was spread for all, whether of high or low degree; and even the poor market people as they trudged along at set of sun with the avails of their oil and butter, their fruits and vegetables, were regaled with choice wine and figs, and oranges, and melons. Kind words were spoken that were not meant in jest, and blessings, both deep and heartfelt, were invoked for the young senora and her lord.

Years rolled by. In the course of time Don Emanuel was gathered to the resting-place of his fathers; Alberto and his bride were blessed with one sweet daughter, and almost fancied themselves supremely happy. Like other mortals they may have been mistaken in this; but it is none the less true that they were exceedingly miserable, when it became necessary for Don Alberto to proceed to Mexico with all speed, or run the hazard of losing the greater portion of his patrimony. Without making any unnecessary delay, he soon after set out for Cadiz, at that time the principal port of commerce with India and America; while the senora, his wife, returned to their residence near Cordova, determined to seclude herself entirely from the world during the period of his absence. The separation, though it promised to be not long, was a severe blow to the Donna Maria. In a few months, however, she received the welcome information that the property her husband had gone to secure was all safely shipped on board of a vessel about to sail for Spain, and that he himself had embarked in a sloop of war, with the hope of making a much more expeditious passage. The hope was not realized. Weeks and months passed away; Don Alberto's gold and silver were deposited in his coffers; and then at length the tidings came that the ship in which he had risked what was far more precious than all, his own existence, had foundered at sea, as it was supposed, and not one of those on board had escaped.

Long and weary had the hours been to the Donna Maria ever since the departure of Don Alberto; but longer and more wearisome were they when his absence was believed to be perpetual. For many days her cheeks were pale with sorrow, and her eyes were red with weeping. She missed—oh! how much she missed—the bright smiles that never rested on her but in gladness, and the dear tones which she was used to fancy were so full of tenderness and truth. The hours of sunlight were very tedious, and the nights sad and lonely. It had ever been to her a sincere

> "Delight to hear
> Her only child misspeak half uttered words;"

and often would she forget her brooding care in witnessing its sportive gambols and listening to its joyous prattle. But soon the thought would force itself upon her that her lot need not be such a solitary one, for the world was just the same as ever, and full of gaiety and pleasure. She was still young and beautiful, aye, even more beautiful than in the days of her maidenhood. Why then might not she enjoy life as others enjoyed it? Why might not she mingle in the crowd? Why should she be forever shut out from the innocent mirth and amusements which had so many charms for her in former years.

The Donna Maria was not unfaithful to her husband's memory. She never thought of him but with love. Still it must be confessed there were times when she strove to think of something else that would not cause her so much unhappiness. She began to feel that it was necessary she should seek for consolation away from the scenes around which the loved, but lost, appeared to linger. And then she determined to go into society more frequently, and see if her heart could not become lighter, and her spirits more buoyant and cheerful. At first she persisted in wearing her dark robes of mourning, but it was not long before a parti-colored riband appeared in her hair, and this was followed by an embroidered collar, and the last succeeded by one article of fashion after another, until almost within the year she shone out in all her resplendent loveliness, heightened by every charm and appliance of the toilet. The incense of flattery was very grateful to her. She was caressed and courted by all; and her peerless charms were toasted in many a cup of wine of Cyprus among the cavaliers

of Cordova. The fame of her beauty and her wealth brought many suitors to her feet, and when she accompanied a noble lady, her cousin, to the court at Madrid, all were in despair. But her star was yet in the ascendant, and not one of the proud and haughty madrilenas of the capital was more eagerly sought after than herself. In a few weeks after the young Duke D'Oriza offered her his hand and heart. She had been much gratified with his attentions, and the conquest was one well calculated to please her fancy; but she hesitated to signify her acceptance. She had doubts; she had misgivings. She once thought that those who had been wedded, not even death could sever; and now she hardly dared to think seriously upon the matter. Her confessor, the pious father Bartholomew, who was a distant kinsman of Don Alberto's, had attended her on the journey; and to him she determined to apply for counsel, half persuading herself at the time that she would follow his advice without hesitation or reluctance.

"Father!" said she, in a low and trembling voice, while her fingers were nervously pressed upon the gilt bars of the confessional ——. "Father! doth our Holy church ever sanction with its blessing a second nuptials?"

"Good and learned men, daughter, doubt it much. And yet I cannot say such things do not happen, and that with the approval of our prelates. We may hope that Heaven's curse does not attend them."

A slight shudder convulsed the limbs of the lady, and she found it impossible to suppress the earnest sigh that escaped her.

"But why dost thou ask this question?" added the priest. "Hast thou ceased to remember thy former husband, and would'st thou wed another?"

"Oh! no; I have not failed to think of him—nor shall I do so—but, father—but is it not wrong to deny myself the pleasures and the felicity that may be in store for me?—is it not a sin to shut myself out from the world which, they tell me, I am fitted to adorn?"

"Flattery may well turn thy heart, daughter. But there are many innocent amusements of which thou can'st partake, and yet remain unwedded."

"And then the world may calumniate—may speak lightly of me."

"True, daughter; true it may. Still would I entreat thee to be faithful to Alberto's love. He was a man of captivating person, and of noble presence."

"Yes, father, was he—and kind and generous!"

"Why then would'st thou forget him?"

"No; not forget him—not forget, father."

"But there is still hope of his return; and—but I would not delude thee with vain fancies. Were Don Alberto living, we should have had tidings from him many months ago."

"Indeed we would, father!"

"Yet, daughter, thy time may be well spent in caring for the temporal and spiritual welfare of thy young daughter, the gentle Isabella."

"Have I not done this, father? Surely I have placed her with the holy sisterhood to whom thou did'st direct me."

"I complain not that thou hast neglected thy duty in this. But I would not have thee wed again!"

Perhaps there was too much of earnestness in the friar's tone, for the Donna Maria answered hastily—

"And could'st thou be jealous, father?"

"Daughter!" said he, gravely; "thou speakest but idly; I would forget the passions and the frailties of humanity. I cannot think that Alberto, who is now, I trust, in Heaven, would approve thy course."

"Truly, father, do I hope to meet him there. Oh! be sure it will rejoice me much!"

"Ah! daughter—but whose bride wilt thou be in that hour?—to what vows wilt thou cling?—those thou hast once uttered, or those thou mayest hereafter take? Say, my daughter?"

"Father, thou mightest well have said thou had'st none of the hopes and feelings that fill the world with gladness. Thou art cold and heartless—thou would'st deny me happiness, life, and everything!"

"No, lady, no! Thou hast a treasure I would bid thee guard with constant care, for it is holy and above all price—a husband's memory! Be true to thine own heart—be true to him—and it will cheer and solace, and comfort thee through all; aye, it will be a sweet and worthy joy to crown thy life with blessedness and peace!"

The priest was silent for a moment, but as the lady answered nothing, he added—

"Think of this thing seriously, my daughter. Thou must decide for thyself; I can say no more."

The fervent language to which she had listened was not altogether disregarded by the Donna Maria; but the current of her thoughts was speedily changed in the bustle and animation of the court; and when the duke again repeated his vows and protestations, and earnestly besought her not to reject his suit, she did not say him nay.

The shades of night were falling fast over the city of Madrid on the day succeeding that of the marriage of the duke and the Donna Maria; when a cavalier, whose features were almost concealed in the folds of the dark cloak slashed with gold lace, which he drew closely around him, hurried rapidly across the open plaza in front of the royal residence. He had barely passed the centre of the square, when his steps were arrested by a startled voice muttering near him—

"That step and gait!—how much resembling his!" The cavalier turned on his heel, and discovered the form of a priest shrouded in hood and cassock Then hastily putting his hand to his pouch, he drew forth a few maravedis, and offering them to the friar, said—

"Here are alms, father!—but stay me not; I am in haste, and have no need of benison, except it be to speed me on my way."

"Don Alberto!—now may all the saints defend me!"

"Ah! is it thou, my good Bartholomew?" exclaimed the cavalier, joyfully extending his hand. "What news of the Donna Maria?—and why art thou here?"

The answer of the priest to his rapid inquiries disclosed much that Don Alberto seemed most anxious to know, but much he would have died rather than to have heard. His own mysterious absence was soon explained. The vessel in which he had sailed was wrecked, but he and a number of his companions had been rescued by an English merchantman on its

way to the East Indies. Without being able to communicate the least intelligence to his friends at home, he found himself thus unexpectedly borne away on a distant voyage. At Batavia he took shipping for Callao, from whence he travelled by land over the rough mountains and sandy deserts of Peru, and the grassy plains of the Brazils to Demerara, where he was so fortunate as to find a vessel bound direct to Terrol. He had arrived there in safety, and was now hastening homeward to relieve the fears and anxiety of his wife, which had caused him many hours of pain and wretchedness; merely pausing at Madrid to deliver some important papers entrusted to him for the prime minister. But when the terrible truth was forced upon him that her he loved so well was now another's bride, it was frightful to behold his agony. His proud heart struggled as if it would burst from his bosom, and the fierce workings of his countenance were perceptible in the sunlight of evening. He had been educated in good and virtuous precepts; he was honorable, generous, and high-souled—loving, trusting, and confiding—but he was also fierce and passionate when he felt that wrong had been done him; and his clenched hand was swayed to and fro like lightning as he called on Heaven to curse this unhallowed bridal.

"Nay, Alberto!" interrupted the priest. "She is the mother of thy child—curse her not."

"Father! leave me," said he, bitterly. "At the early dawn I may be found on the Calle Alcala. Seek me there, for I would speak with thee again."

The priest murmured his blessing and they separated.

It was past midnight; and the silver lamp hanging suspended from the ceiling shed its mellow light through the bed-chamber of the Donna Maria, mingling its rich perfumes with the fragrance of the choicest flowers from the Prado and the Delicias. The crimson damask hangings of the room, with their gold fringe and tassels, moved slightly in the breeze. The bed curtains were of the brightest orange, and draped away on either hand from the centre, where they hung attached to the bills of two doves carved in porphyry, and joined together with bands of myrtle. The tester was of blue satin, fluted and trimmed with a deep border of lace. All was still in the apartment, save the measured breathing of two sleepers—that of one soft and gentle as an angel's whisper, while the other was deep and heavy like that of strong and active manhood. The interior of the couch was thrown into the shade, and the form of a lovely woman was alone visible. Nothing could be more faultless than the symmetry of her limbs, whose exquisite porportions were revealed in the movements of an unquiet slumber. The round white arm thrown carelessly over the counterpane; the ripe lips, the blooming cheeks, and the dark ringlets escaping from her head-dress, formed a picture beautiful to look upon.

Thus slept the Donna Maria, dreaming of high thoughts and a high destiny; but little thinking that the eyes of one who had only too much right to survey those charms, were fastened upon her. The soft India matting on which Don Alberto placed his foot, as he thrust the tapestry aside and stepped into the chamber, gave back no sound. Slowly and noiselessly he advanced to the bed, and as his eye rested on the wife from whom he had parted in such deep sorrow, a faint but sickly smile lighted up his countenance. For an instant he gazed sadly and earnestly upon her, and then muttered—

"So fair!—so beautiful!—and yet so false! But I will print one more kiss upon this smooth brow, where his, perhaps, have never lingered."

He leaned over her silently and pressed his lips upon her forehead; and then gentler feelings stole over him, and a tear glistened in his eye. He might have relented in all, for he was sorely moved; but as he raised his head her lips were opened in her dreams. Breathlessly he again bent forward to hear her speak, and as the whispered tones reached his ear he started as if a sudden pain convulsed him The words were scarcely audible—they spoke of love; but the name of Alberto was not coupled with them. The intruder groaned in bitterness of heart; and his eye-balls shone like twin meteors. His hand was instantly carried beneath his cloak, and a few steps brought him to the further side of the couch. The curtains were parted quickly, and a bright line of light seemed to cleave the air. This was followed by the sharp cutting sound of a sword-thrust, and a low, half-stifled moan. The victim struggled not much, for Don Alberto held him motionless, as if endowed with a giant's strength. Once the lady rose half way from her pillow, as though in affright, but she sank back again quietly as if naught had happened.

When the morning broke, the Donna Maria sprang up lightly from her couch to inhale the fresh and balmy gale; but, as she did so, the glare of blood caught the eye, and her shrieks resounded wildly through the corridor. Horror-stricken was she at the dreadful disclosure, and for weeks she raved madly of Alberto and the duke. None knew whose hand had dealt the blow. The family of the duke made every exertion to discover the assassin; suspicion fell on a servant whom he had lately punished severely, and dismissed from his service; and the suspicion became certainty when it was known that he had suddenly disappeared. Efforts were made to ferret out his retreat, but without avail. Shortly after the Donna Maria was restored to health and consciousness, however, a billet was found one day upon her dressing-table, which simply contained these words:

"*The vengeance has been mine!—let repentance be thy task!*"

The characters were too well known for her to be mistaken, and yet she was not much surprised. She was sure the billet came through Father Bartholomew, though she never questioned him. The truth had flashed upon her long before, but she spake not of it. And this last secret also remained unrevealed. No one knew she had received the billet, and no one ever saw or heard its contents. Bowed down with anguish, and completely subdued in spirit, she determined to take the veil; and ere the year had expired she sought a refuge from her sorrows in the convent, where she died. The daughter grew up in matchless grace and loveliness, and was mated happily and well; while the father perished, solitary and alone, a hermit on a far-off shore.

THE TWO ACTS;

OR, "THEY HAVE THEIR REWARD."

BY HENRY G. LEE.

"No, indeed! I shall do no such thing," said Mrs. Lionel to her husband, who had come home with the intelligence that a cousin of his, a widow, had died suddenly, and left a little girl three years old, whom he proposed that his wife should adopt and raise as her own—they having no children. But she gave a decided negative on the spot.

"She is a sweet, interesting child," urged Mr. Lionel. "You will soon get attached to her, and be more than repaid in the new affection awakened in your heart, for all the care and trouble she may occasion."

"It is no use to talk to me, Mr. Lionel," returned the lady, in a positive tone of voice. "I know about the care and trouble, and am not willing to take it upon myself. As I have no children of my own, I am not disposed to take the burden of other people's. So it is useless for you to press this subject; for I will never consent to what you propose."

"If you feel that way, I shall certainly not urge the matter," said her husband. "Though, as far as I am concerned, it would give me great pleasure to adopt Aggy, who is a charming little creature. I wish you could see her."

"I have no particular desire. All children are alike to me. As to the beauty, that is a poor compensation for the trouble. So I must beg to be excused."

Mr. Lionel said no more on the subject. He was exceedingly fond of children, and never ceased to regret that he had none of his own. In two or three instances before, he had endeavored to prevail upon his wife to adopt a child, but she had, each time, firmly declined. She had very little affection for children herself, and was not willing to take the care and trouble that she saw would necessarily be involved in the adoption of a child. The little girl who, by the death of his cousin, had been left homeless and apparently friendless, was a sweet young creature, whom, to look upon was to love. Mr. Lionel had never seen her without a warming of his heart toward her, and a secret wish that she were his own instead of another's. The moment he heard of his cousin's death, he determined to adopt Agnes, or Aggy, as she was called, provided his wife were willing. But Mrs. Lionel was not willing. She was too selfish to love anything out of herself. A thought of the child's good—of giving a home to the homeless—of being a mother to the motherless—never crossed her mind. She only thought of the trouble the little orphan would give.

The insuperable difficulty in the way of adopting Aggy as his own, did not destroy the interest which Mr. Lionel felt in her. He considered it his duty to see that she was provided with a good home, and was willing to be at the cost of her maintenance, if necessary. His first thought had been to adopt the child, and until that was understood to be out of the question, he had thought of nothing else in regard to her. How she was to be disposed of, now that his wife had definitely settled the matter against him, became a new subject of reflection. After due deliberation, he concluded to see a distant relative on the subject, with whom, since his marriage, he had held but little familiar intercourse, although he had always entertained for her a high respect. The reason of this was, the cold, proud, unsocial temper of his wife, who rather looked down upon his relatives because their standing in society was not, as she considered it, quite as high as her's had been and still was. Necessarily, such a disposition in his wife, would prevent much social intercourse between Mr. Lionel and his relatives, notwithstanding his regard for them might continue as high as before his marriage.

The relative to whom reference has just been made, was a lady whose husband, a very estimable man, was in moderately good circumstances. They had three children of their own, the youngest of which was nearly ten years of age. From his high appreciation of Mrs. Wellford's character, Mr. Lionel, who, from thinking of Aggy as his adopted child, began to love her almost as much as if she were really his own, felt a strong desire that she should take the orphan. He had not seen her for a couple of years when he called upon her to talk about the orphan. A little to his surprise, Mrs. Wellford, when she met him in the parlor, entered, leading Aggy by the hand.

"Dear little creature!" he said, taking the child up in his arms, and kissing her as soon as he had shaken hands with Mrs. Wellford. "I am glad to see you in such good hands. It is about this very child, Mary," he added, "that I have come to talk with you. What is to be done with her?"

"I don't know," returned Mrs. Wellford. "She must have a home somewhere among us. The dear child! Anybody could love her. Have you thought of taking her?"

"If I were to consult my own feelings and wishes, I should adopt her as my own child immediately. But I am not at liberty to do this, and, therefore, must not think about it. I am willing, however, to be at

the entire cost of her maintainance and education, if you will undertake the care of her. What I can do, I will do with all my heart."

"We have already talked, seriously, about adding Aggy to our little household," replied Mrs. Wellford. "And if no one else offers to do so, we will keep her and do for her the same as if she were our own. It will bring more care and anxiety for me, which, as my health is not good, will be felt; but if not better provided for, it will be my duty to take the place of her mother, and I will assume the office cheerfully."

"But at my charge," said Mr. Lionel.

"No," replied Mrs. Wellford. "A mother accepts no pay for her duty. It is a labor of love and brings its own sweet reward. Though Providence has not given us wealth, yet we have enough, and, I think, as much to spare as this dear child will need. For your kind wishes and intentions for Aggy, I will thank you, in her stead. I thought, perhaps, as you had no children, that you might wish to adopt her; but, as this cannot be, it will doubtless fall to our lot."

Mr. Lionel went home, feeling less satisfied with his wife's spirit and temper, so strongly contrasted, as it was, with that of Mrs. Wellford, than he had felt for a long time.

"She will have her reward," he murmured to himself, "and, as she said, justly, it will be sweet." This was in allusion to Mrs. Wellford, who had called the mother's duty she was about assuming, a labor of love.

Little Aggy scarcely felt the loss of her parent. The love she had borne her mother, was transferred to her aunt, as Mrs. Wellford was called, so early that no void was left in her heart. It took but a little while, for each member of the family to feel that Aggy had a right to be among them, and for Mr. and Mrs. Wellford to love her as their own child.

Years rolled by, and brought them many unlooked for changes both to Mrs. Lionel and Mrs. Wellford. Both had been subjected to afflictions and reverses—the severest, perhaps, that ordinarily, fall to the lot of any—for both were widows and both friendless and poor. As for Mrs. Wellford, she had not only lost her husband, but all her children were taken, and she was left alone in the world with the orphan Aggy. But she, grown into a lovely young woman, nestled closer to her side, and into her very bosom; though not with a helpless, but in a sustaining spirit. Death, though he had robbed her of much, had still left her much. Bereaved as she had been, she was neither lonely nor sad. How different was the case of Mrs. Lionel! After the death of her husband, and the total loss of her property, she fell back at once from her advanced position in the social rank, into neglect, obscurity and want. For the very means of subsistence, exertion became necessary. But what could she do for a living, who had, in her whole life, done scarcely a useful thing—who had been little better than a drone in the social hive? Nothing! Or, if there was small ability, there was pride enough remaining to prevent its exercise.

After her husband's death, which followed shortly after the reverses that stripped him of all worldly possessions, Mrs. Lionel retired into the family of a poor relative, who had been little thought of in brighter days, and who, although she did not want to receive her, could not close her door in her face. A sad spectacle she was Shut up in the little chamber that was assigned her, she never went out, and only met the family she was burdening with her presence, at the table, and then with an aspect so gloomy and reserved, as to throw a chill over the feelings of all.

For a short period, Mrs. Lionel paid a small sum for her boarding, but no very long time passed before all her money was exhausted, and she became absolutely dependent upon a poor woman, very distantly related to her, whose only means of support was her personal labor and that of her daughter.

After the death of her husband and children, Mrs. Wellford, who was left quite as poor as Mrs. Lionel, began to look around her for some means of securing an income for herself and Agnes, whom she loved, now that all the rest were gone, with a tenderness that equalled the sum of her love for all. But, what to do, was a difficult thing to determine. As a young girl her education had been very plain. She could not, therefore, resort to teaching in any branch, for she had not the requisite ability. Sewing always gave her a severe pain in the breast and side, so that, whatever might be her skill in needle work, she was precluded from resorting to it as a means of obtaining money.

"I think," she said to Agnes, after looking at the subject in every possible light, "that there is but one thing left for me to do."

"What is that, aunt?" inquired Agnes.

"Taking a few boarders. I could attend to them."

"It will be very hard work," suggested the niece, "too hard for you. No—no, aunt, that will not do. Look what a slave's life Mrs. Minturn has! Don't think of it."

"I must do something, you know, Aggy, dear. In a little while all our money will be gone. I have thought of everything, but my mind comes back to this at last. I don't like the thought of it, but it is right for me to exert myself, and I must do so without a murmur."

"Haven't you yet thought of anything that I can do?" asked Agnes, in a cheerful voice. "I am sure that I can do something," she added, confidently, "and I am younger, and have better health than you have."

"I cannot think, my dear child," Mrs. Wellford said, with much tenderness in her voice, "of your being exposed to the world's rough contact. You are too young."

"The contact you seem so to dread, cannot hurt me, aunt," returned Agnes. "To the pure all things are pure. If I have in me a right spirit, the world cannot hurt me."

"But I cannot bear the thought of seeing you, in the very spring time of life, when all along your path should grow up flowers to fill the air with perfume, chained like a slave to the car of labor. No, no, Aggy; it must not be! I can do all that is required. If I fail, then it will be time enough for me to call upon you for aid."

Pride as well as affection reigned in the breast of Mrs. Wellford. She could not bear the thought of

seeing Agnes engaged in any kind of labor for money. She was fully capable of giving instruction in many things, and of securing, thereby, a fair income; but her aunt would not hear to her seeking for employment.

"Aunt is wrong," Agnes said to herself, when alone, soon after the interview in which Mrs. Wellford declared it as her belief that the only thing left for her to do, was to take a few boarders. "I ought not to see her do this." She sat thoughtful for a few moments, and then added aloud—"and I will not see her do it. I have received everything from her, and now is the time for me to make some return. But what shall I do? Where shall I seek for employment?"

Half an hour after she had asked herself these questions so earnestly, Agnes picked up a newspaper, and the first thing that met her eyes was an advertisement for a person to give lessons in music, and one or two modern languages to three young ladies, for which a liberal compensation would be paid. Without saying a word to her aunt, Agnes put on her things and went to the place mentioned in the advertisement. The house before which she paused was a very large one, in a fashionable part of the city. Everything around it indicated a wealthy owner. For a few moments she felt timid, and hesitated about presenting herself; but she soon regained her self-possession, and made the application for which she had come.

A middle aged woman, of mild and lady-like deportment, met her on being shown into one of the apartments of the house.

"I believe you advertised for a teacher?" said Agnes, speaking in a low, trembling voice. She found herself more agitated than she had expected.

"We did," replied the lady, "and have already received several applications; though none of those who have answered the advertisement, suit us in all respects. And I am afraid that we shall hardly find all that we desire in you."

There was nothing in the way this was said to hurt the feelings of Agnes, but rather to make her feel more free to speak.

"Why do you think I will not suit?" she asked, looking earnestly into the lady's face.

"Because you are too young. You cannot be over seventeen years of age."

"I am nineteen," returned Agnes.

"But even that is young. We wish a person of some experience, and of the first ability. I will not question your ability, but you certainly cannot have much experience in teaching. Have you ever given lessons in music?"

"Not yet; but I wish to do so, and believe that I could give satisfaction."

"Then you have never been engaged in teaching at all?"

"No—never."

"I hardly think you would suit us."

The countenance of Agnes fell so suddenly that the lady's sympathies were awakened, and she said—

"Are you very desirous of securing a situation as teacher?"

"Desirous above all things," replied Agnes, with much earnestness.

The lady continued to ask question after question, until she understood fully what was in the young girl's mind. She then appreciated her more highly, although she did not believe her fully qualified to give the instruction that was desired. Agnes, who gained confidence the more she conversed with the lady, at length urged that she might have a trial.

"But suppose, after we give you a trial, that you do not suit us. We shall find it hard to send you away."

The force of this objection was fully appreciated by the lady when she uttered it, for already she felt so drawn toward the young girl with whom she was holding the interview, that her feelings were fast getting the control of her judgment.

"I am sure I will suit you," replied Agnes, "for I will give the most untiring attention to my duties."

The lady looked at her beautiful young face, lit up with the earnestness of a true purpose, and felt as she had never before felt for a stranger. She addressed her a few words in French, to which Agnes replied in the same language.

"Your accent is certainly very correct. Now let me hear you perform something on the piano," she said.

Agnes went to the instrument, and after selecting a piece of music, sat down and ran her fingers gracefully over the keys. The lady stood by to listen. Soon the young girl was in the midst of one of Hertz's most beautiful but familiar compositions, which she executed with unusual taste as well as brilliancy. Her touch was exquisite, and at the same time full, and, where required, bold and confident.

"Admirable!" she heard uttered in a low voice, just beind her, as she struck the last note in the piece. It was not the voice of a woman.

She started up and turned quickly. More auditors than she had supposed were present A young man, and three beautiful young girls stood listening behind their mother. They had been attracted from an adjoining room by the music, so far superior to anything ordinarily heard. A deep crimson overspread the sweet young face of Agnes, heightening every native charm. The young man instantly retired, and the mother introduced her to her daughters, who were in love with so lovely an instructress, and threw their voices at once in her favor. These voices but seconded the mother's prepossessions.

"Nothing has yet been said about compensation," remarked the lady to Agnes, after she had requested the girls to leave them again alone. "We are willing to pay liberally if we can get the person we want. At present, I feel strongly in favor of giving you a trial. If after thinking over the subject, it is concluded to do so, your salary will be four hundred dollars. Do you think that will meet your wishes?"

"Fully," replied Agnes, with an emotion that she could scarcely conceal. The sum was larger than she had expected.

"Of course, I would like to be at home every night with my aunt," she said.

"To that we should make no objection. To-morrow morning I will be prepared to give you an answer."

Agnes retired with a heart full of hope, yet trembling lest something should prevent the engagement she was

so eager to make. She said nothing to her aunt, who, bent on taking boarders, started out on the ensuing morning to look for a house suited for that purpose. As soon as she was gone, Agnes went with a trembling heart to hear the decision that was to be made in favor or against her application. It was favorable!

On going home, she found that her aunt had not yet returned, nor did she come back for two hours. Then she was so worn down with fatigue that she had to go to bed. A cup of tea revived her; but her head ached so badly that she did not get up until late in the afternoon, when she was better.

"I have found a house, Aggy," she said, as soon as she felt like alluding to the subject, "that will just suit. The owner is to give me an answer about it to-morrow."

"If looking for a house has made you sick enough to go to bed, aunt," returned Agnes, "how can you expect to bear the fatigue of keeping boarders in the house after you have taken it? You must not think of it. In two good rooms, at a light rent, we can live very comfortably, and at an expense much lighter than we have at present to bear."

"Yes, Agnes, comfortably enough, if we had the ability to meet that expense. But we have not. You know that there is no income."

"There has been none—but——" •

"But what, dear?" Mrs. Wellford saw that there was something more than usual in the mind of Agnes.

"Forgive me, dear aunt," said the affectionate girl, throwing her arms around the neck of her relative; "but I cannot see you, at your time of life and in ill health, compelled to toil as you propose. I have, therefore, applied for, and secured a situation in a private family as a teacher of music and languages to three young ladies, for which I am to receive a salary of four hundred dollars a year."

While Mrs. Wellford was looking for a house, and after she had found one, the fatigue and pain she suffered led her more fully to realize, than she had done before, the great labor with a doubtful result, that she was taking upon herself. She was, therefore, just in the state of mind to receive the unexpected communication made by Agnes.

"You are a good girl," she merely replied, kissing her as she spoke.

"And you do not object?" eagerly asked the niece.

"How can I?" responded Mrs. Wellford, leaning her head down upon the shoulder of Agnes. In a few moments, she said, as she looked up, with tears glittering on her eyelashes—"may Heaven reward you!" And turning away, she left Agnes to her own happy thoughts.

Six months from this time, as Mrs. Lionel sat alone in her room, gloomy and sad, the woman with whom she was living, and upon whom she still laid herself, a heavy burden, came in where she was, and said—

"Did you know that your niece, Agnes Wellford, was married, yesterday, to the son of one of the richest men in town."

"No! It can't be!" quickly replied Mrs. Lionel. "Mr. Wellford died not worth a dollar, and his widow has been as poor as poverty ever since."

"No, not quite that," said the woman. "Agnes has supported her comfortably by teaching musc. I heard the whole story this morning. Mrs. Wellford wanted to keep boarders, but Agnes wouldn't hear to it, and, against her aunt's wishes, went out and applied for a place as teacher to three young ladies in a wealthy family, for which she received a salary of four hundred dollars a year. She had not taught long before the brother of the young ladies fell in love with her, to which no very strong objection was made by his friends. And now they are married."

"And what of Mrs. Wellford?" was eagerly inquired.

"They go to housekeeping forthwith, and Mrs. Wellford is to live with them."

Mrs. Lionel clasped her hands together, and sinking back in her chair, exclaimed—

"Oh! what an error I committed!"

"How?" inquired the woman.

But Mrs. Lionel did not answer the question.

She had *her* reward, and Mrs. Wellford had *hers*.

TURNING OVER A NEW LEAF.

BY T. S. ARTHUR.

"I'VE put up with this order of things long enough," said Mrs. Perkins, her voice pitched higher than usual, and her face in a glow. "There is a point where patience ceases to be a virtue; and to that point I have arrived. I will turn over a new leaf."

"Take care," remarked Mr. Perkins, who was buttoning his coat close up to his chin, "that, in turning this new leaf, you do not come to a page harder to read than the one that now lies open."

"I will risk all that," said the wife. "Things can't be worse than they now are."

Mr. Perkins went off to his store. Holding her baby in her arms, swinging her body with a short, quick motion, Mrs. Perkins sat meditating certain domestic reforms, for at least a quarter of an hour before she was prepared for action.

The aspect of affairs we will briefly state. Mrs. Perkins had a cook, named Mary, who, six months before, had been installed in the family as "culinary artiste." She was from the green Island, and professed to know how to do everything, and a little more besides. On entering the house of Mrs. Perkins, she waited upon the mistress in her nursery, and there underwent the usual catechetical ordeal through which raw domestics are sometimes required to pass.

"Very well, Mary," closed this scene. "You can go into the kitchen. You will find everything there. After awhile, I will come down and give you any instruction you may require."

But Mrs. Perkins did not find leisure to do as she said. Her husband sent home provisions from the market, and Mary assumed the task of cooking them. When dinner came upon the table, it was "done," certainly. Mr. Perkins grumbled, and Mrs. Perkins was worried.

"Cooked to death!" said the former.

"I am in despair of ever having anything done right," sighed the latter.

At supper time, the tea had a strange taste to it; and at breakfast time on the next morning, the coffee was lukewarm, and as pale as dishwater. It was clear now, that Mrs. Perkins must see after her new cook, who could "do everything." A little sharp talking made some salutary changes, though it caused a slight exhibition of temper on the part of Mary, and left her in a sulky mood for several days.

By watching and scolding for a month or two, Mrs. Perkins got Mary so that she could do pretty well. But, on ceasing these amiable demonstrations, matters receded, and things went back to sixes and sevens again, and there remained until, roused into a sudden energy, Mrs. Perkins determined to turn over a new leaf in her family. Mary was not alone in her short comings. Nancy, the chambermaid, and James, the waiter, were likewise sinners against the comfort of the household; and, in turning over the proposed new leaf, accounts were to be settled with them also.

The special cause of this demonstration against the lower powers in the house was the fact that, from being permitted to do pretty much as they pleased, cook, waiter and chambermaid had found it convenient to take as little trouble to themselves as possible. In consequence, their encroachments upon the comfort of the family, and their various short comings in regard to plain matters of duty, had become, to use Mrs. Perkins' own words, "absolutely unbearable." It is possible that such a state of affairs would never have come into existence, if Mrs. Perkins had "seen after things" a little more than she was in the habit of doing, and exercised a mild, but firm control over her domestics. Experience has demonstrated the fact—a hard one for some people to believe—that cooks and waiters, if left to themselves, are not generally apt to discharge their several duties with exemplary faithfulness. Mrs. Perkins had discovered this, but it puzzled her to understand how there could be so little want of principle; in fact, of common integrity, among servants as a class. Although the thing was plain before her eyes, she could not believe it practically, and, therefore, as a general habit, trusted in the ability and willingness of her domestics to do every thing right. Most sadly was she at times disappointed, yet experience did not seem to make her any wiser. Occasionally, it is true, when matters got desperate, she would "turn over a new leaf." But, after having done so, it was a serious question in the lady's mind whether the consequences of the remedy were not worse than the original disease itself had been.

But to go on with our story. After Mr. Perkins had been gone about half an hour, Mrs. Perkins gave the chamber bell a vigorous jerk. She waited for one minute—it seemed to her five—and then she grasped the bell-rope again. Nancy was never very prompt in answering such calls, and, as general thing, rarely heard the first bell. There is no doubt of the fact that she heard the second one on this occasion. There was an angry emphasis in the way the little clapper rung against its reverberating sides, that startled Nancy for a moment. But, was she to be frightened? Oh, no! Leisurely she ascended from the dining-room, where she was gossipping with James and Mary, and opening the door of her mistress' room, just as she was about rising to make another tintinnabulary de monstration, said, with an air of perfect coolness—

"Did you ring, ma'am?"

"Did I ring!" exclaimed the excited Mrs. Perkins "You know I did! Here! Take the baby!"

And she placed the child in Nancy's arms with the air of a woman whose mind was made up to act decisively in some matter of importance. Then sweeping from the room, she descended to the kitchen, and made a fierce attack upon Mary something after this fashion.

"See here, my lady! I've put up with your doings long enough. And now I'm going to have a change. There's to be a new leaf turned over in this house."

Mary, who was leisurely pursuing her morning's work, feeling in a very composed state of mind, started as if a torpedo had exploded at her feet, and turned, wonderingly, toward her mistress, who went on.

"There hasn't been a meal cooked in the house fit to eat for a month. Any one, professing to be a cook, to send up such a breakfast as you did this morning. Mr. Perkins hardly ate a thing, and, for my part, a mouthful of it would have choked me. It's outrageous! And just look what a state your kitchen is in. More like a pig-pen than anything else. I tell you what, my lady; this won't suit me. Just look at that barrel of flour! Where's the cover? Left standing open as a receptacle for all the dust and dirt of the kitchen! It is too bad!"

Mrs. Perkins was fairly up, and this was but a preamble, dimly shadowing forth the point, scope, and forcible tenor of the resolutions that followed. Having, as it appeared to her, given Mary some faint idea of the fact that she was in earnest, and that a new leaf was actually to be turned over in the house, Mrs. Perkins next attacked James, and holding up his short comings in bold relief, proceeded to give him *such* a "setting down." The man stared, wondered, became confused, and then got angry, and talked back. That wouldn't do. Mrs. Perkins was not a woman to take impudence from any one, especially a servant. So she ordered him to take himself off, bag and baggage. James did not wait for a second intimation, but retired while the leaf turning process was still in operation.

After rating James, Mrs. Perkins went back to the nursery. She was in a precious state of excitement. Upon the chambermaid were now opened the vials of her wrath. But Nancy, like James, faced the storm instead of bending under it, and gave her mistress "as good as she sent." In no mood to brook even a civil reply, Mrs. Perkins could not stand this, and ordered Nancy off of the premises as unceremoniously as she had done the waiter. Nancy retired from the room in the very midst of the storm, and left her mistress to cool off as best she could.

To every storm succeeds a calm. The calm that followed this outbreak, was, to Mrs. Perkins, like a calm at sea. The tempest roared no longer—externally all was calm—but there was deep, heavy rolling in the waters below. The ground swell was tremendous. While in this unhappy state, and while a consciousness of the folly she had committed, at first dimly perceived, was now beginning to grow clearer and clearer to her mind, the door of her room opened, and Nancy appeared, dressed to go out, and with her bundle in her hand.

"Will you pay me, ma'am?" said the chambermaid, looking daggers of indignation.

"Certainly," was Mrs. Perkins' frowning reply. "How much is it?"

"Five dollars, ma'am."

Mrs. Perkins thought for a few moments.

"Very well," said she, after satisfying herself that the amount was correct; and drawing forth her purse, took therefrom the sum of money required. Nancy received it with an offended air, and saying, half impudently, "good bye, ma'am," retired without even kissing the baby! That last omission was never forgotten nor forgiven.

Scarcely ten minutes elapsed, before Mary appeared and made a like demand. James had already taken his departure. Mrs. Perkins began to feel a little blank. But, she was a woman of spirit when her spirits were fairly up. It was not in her to bend an inch to one below her. So Mary was paid, and the lady was left alone.

The new leaf had been turned, but the page was blank!

Four long hours were passed from the time Mrs. Perkins and her offended domestics parted company, until her husband came home to dinner. Nearly the whole of that period had been spent by the lady in weeping. She felt mortified, helpless, and utterly discouraged. The baby was more fretful than usual, and little Aggy and Charley had beset her with their hundred wants, and almost driven her beside herself. There was no dinner cooked; she had not even attempted that achievement.

"Bless me!" exclaimed Mr. Perkins, when his ring was answered by his wife with the baby in her arms. "What's the matter! Where's Nancy?"

"Gone."

"Gone!"

"Yes. She went away directly after breakfast."

"How come that?" asked Mr. Perkins.

"She gave me some of her impudence, and I told her to go," replied the lady.

By this time they were in sight of the dining-room, which showed no indications of dinner.

"Where's James?" was now inquired.

"He's gone, also."

"James gone! How did that happen?"

"I sent him off for the same reason that I did Nancy."

"Was he insolent to you?" said Mr. Perkins, with a marked expression of indignation.

"If you had heard him, you would have thought so."

"The rascal! It wouldn't have been well for him if I had been at home. But where is Mary? I don't see any sign of dinner. Has she gone too?"

"Yes. They're all gone."

"Humph!" Mr. Perkins stood thoughtful for a few moments, unable to comprehend the meaning of so strange a state of affairs. Soon, however, a dim perception of the truth began to dawn upon his mind. The recollection of some events and expressions of the morning came back, and he evinced, at length, his clear convictions on the subject, by saying—

"So you *have* turned over a new leaf, and with a vengeance, I should say!"

Mr. Perkins spoke a little fretfully. He was annoyed, and he could not help showing it. How the trouble had originated and reached its present climax, he understood as clearly as if he had seen everything with his own eyes, and heard everything with his own ears.

But the rebuke, coming as it did upon her own self-reproaches, was too much for the unhappy wife, and her only answer was a gush of tears. To sooth and calm, in the best way he could, was the next effort of the hungry husband. When it is understood, that he had sent home from market on that very morning, a particularly fine piece of show beef, and had gone over his lunch hour in order to secure a good appetite, the merit of this effort will be duly appreciated.

Before night, Mr. Perkins obtained from an intelligence office a couple of raw Irish girls, neither of whom could cook a potato decently. With the aid of these, his wife set her domestic machinery once more in motion, but it labored hard, and creaked and groaned for a long time, before it ran easily. She has changed half a dozen times since, and now has pretty fair "help." But cook, waiter, and chambermaid, all have many failings; and their sins of omission and commission are becoming so numerous, that Mrs. Perkins seriously contemplates turning over a new leaf. She intimated as much to her husband a few days ago. He replied—

"For Heaven's sake, Jane, don't turn any more leaves!"

This caused a temporary postponement. But, human nature cannot bear everything; and as sure as Mrs. Perkins is a woman of spirit, and not to be imposed upon by a set of idle, careless, neglectful domestics, the leaf will be turned.

THE WIFE.

A TALE OF MEXICO.

BY MAYNE REID.

"One—two—three—six—yes, it is just now six years, Inez—six short, happy years since that most happy day of my life when you promised to make me blessed—and well have you kept that promise, Inez—yes, well have you kept it. You have been to me all that the most favored husband could wish, kind, constant and truthful; and the slight, yet painful fears that I once had of you, Inez, have all perished before six years of unwavering fidelity. All—all!"

The husband kissed the forehead of his young and beautiful wife—a slight blush was on the cheek of Inez. He saw it and continued—

"Fears did I say, Inez? Do not misunderstand me—not fears that you, my wife, should ever prove false to your marriage vow. No, Inez, such a thought could never gain admission in this heart. Too well know I thy purity of heart, thy soul of honor—it was not this, but sometimes, I confess me, the painful suspicion would cloud my mind, that—that—before our happy but somewhat unequal union, your heart might have been given to some more youthful lover."

The blush upon the cheek of Inez became deeper, and her eyes were suddenly averted.

"It was a hard lot thine, sweet girl, to be linked with one who might seem thy father—a hard lot, and for the first years of our marriage I did repent me for thy sake, Inez—for thy sake. I have done all that a husband could do to cheer your path over what might be a thorny road. All that my wealth could purchase you have controlled—have I not been kind to you, Inez?"

"You have, sir—you have——"

"I would not be so unkind now as to remind you of this, but to say my heart, Inez, is full—full of happiness—you have far more than outdone me in kindnesses, in faith, in your gentle and constant devotion; and when I look into your eyes as now, and kiss your sweet lips, and hold you in my arms thus, as on the day of our bridal, the old soldier, Inez, feels his youth returning. I feel myself the happiest man in the valley of Mexico."

General Leon gazed long and lovingly in the eyes of his beautiful wife. At intervals he kissed the white Castilian brow and the blushing cheek. They sat for some time in silence. His happiness was too full to allow him its further expression in words. The thoughtful manner of Inez betrayed a strange admixture of feelings, in which, perhaps, duty and gratitude predominated. The picture was by no means strange or uncommon—a scene enacted every day. Youth and beauty in the embrace of age and wealth. And yet you could not call Leon an old man. There was no sign of old age in the glance of that keen, dark eye, and though the brow was slightly furrowed, and the hair silvered, it was the work of many a campaign, and that form was still firm and unbending, and that step still preserved the springy elasticity of youth. No, Leon was not an old man. He might have passed his forty-fifth year. It was the contrast, however, that struck you, for she was certainly not over twenty-three. She had married, as is the custom of her land, in the precocity of almost childhood—and according to that custom too, where the bride's will has but little to do in the choice of the bridegroom. A story of every day life. A history of frequent occurrence. Inez was the daughter of a poor merchant. Leon was a general, distinguished and enriched by the revolutionary struggles of his unhappy country. He had retired from military life since his marriage, and devoted all his time to the happiness of his young wife. He loved her with his full heart. It was this very love, that during the first years of their wedded life, had rendered him wary, perhaps suspicious. His was not a blind devotion—for Leon was a man of the world, and had but little faith in the doctrine of woman's infallibility. His jealousy—if we might term it so—had never assumed a substantial form as it knew no object, and only sprung from the disparity of their years. The existence of such a feeling he had always scrupulously concealed from Inez, and it only existed in the earlier years of their marriage.

Now that six years of tried constancy had passed over, without one occurrence to ruffle the calm of his growing confidence, all these earlier suspicions had disappeared, and the old soldier began to think that his manhood and fame, perhaps—his unbounded and untiring kindness and devotion had reached the heart of his young wife, and that he was beloved in turn. This too is no uncommon chapter in the heart's history. There was nothing in the conduct of Inez that would seem to contradict this belief. If so, it might be that she seemed *too* faithful, too devoted to her unequal mate. The tongue of slander, however, which is no where more malignant than in the circles of Mexican society, had never whispered aught to her dishonor, and all that could be cavilled at in her character, was her strange but sweet melancholy. This dreamy thoughtfulness had been often remarked; and when one of her friends rallied her upon it, an effort on her part to shake it off or conceal it could easily be observed. This melancholy too had done much to keep alive the unhappy suspicions of Leon. Six years, however, and no change. "It must then," thought he, "be habitual, constitutional," and thus did the fond, doting husband fling himself upon the roses of a trusting affection.

The short dialogue, or rather monologue we have above recorded, occurred in the verandah of a beautiful mansion in Tacubaya. It was the month of August, when the wealthy families of Mexico desert their prison palaces in the city, to pass their summer hours in the sweet villages of San Angel, Ilalpam, Tacubaya and Mizcoac. The house of Leon was one of the finest in Tacubaya, with all the advantages of a garden richly cultivated, fountains and bright shrubberies. Everything that wealth, and a cultivated taste could suggest, were so disposed as to make it a home worthy of the beautiful Inez de Mora. Leon and his young wife sat in the verandah. Articles of luxury lay around:—everything likely to gratify the caprice of a beautiful woman. The great gate was open, as these were times of peace, under the administration of the wise Herrera. The scene was such a one as would lend to love its most romantic and poetical interest. Orange trees growing out of the marble pavement of the "patio," dropped their bright green leaves into a crystal fountain, that sprinkled them with the cool waters of the Southern Sierra. Red and gold fish played in the snow white basin. The loreto, perched upon the boughs of a sweet lemon tree, uttered its mimic cry; and two or three beautiful Indian pea-fowls stalked proudly around the fountain, vain of their dazzling shadows reflected in the smooth surface of the water. Leon felt the influence of the scene, and sat for a time with Inez in his arms, fondly gazing upon her beautiful face, and kissing her with a tender and confiding affection. A slight noise at the entrance to the patio roused him from his revery of love. A foot was on the marble pavement, and after a short dialogue between the porter and some one at the gate, a servant in a rich livery entered.

The latter passing up the verandah after a respectful salute, handed a small billet to Dona Inez, and again bowing, turned and walked away as he had come. There was nothing unusual in this occurrence.

Inez opened the note and read it. It ran as follows:

"Dearest Inez.—On Sunday evening I intend giving a little masquerade. I will expect you of course with the General. Let me know before hand in what character you will come. At ten o'clock we will be ready to receive you. Yours,
Luisa Gordoa."

Inez handed the note to her husband with an exclamation of delight, tempered, however, with a slight anxiety as to the effect the invitation might produce upon him. An ill-concealed feeling of unhappiness appeared upon the countenance of the general as he ran his eye over its contents.

He folded the note and returned it with the simple observation—

"I never approved of these masquerades. They are among the worst of our national follies."

"But you will go, Leon?"

"Do you wish it, Inez?"

"How disappointed will Luisa be."

"The rich widow will have a thousand others to console her."

Inez was silent. Leon sat for a moment without looking up. He was evidently embarrassed. After a pause he continued—

"But, dearest Inez, you wish to go to this ball—we shall go then—and when I bethink me it is two years since you attended one, I have been much to blame—forgive me, Inez, but I am so happy with you alone—these amusements cannot add to my happiness—with you it may be different."

Inez made no reply. The first refusal though slight, had checked her enthusiasm, and though wishing to go, she could no longer urge it. She had been wounded. Leon perceived this, and now in turn began to feign a desire to attend the masquerade, and a servant was dspatched to the Dona Luisa with a note accepting the invitation. Sunday evening came round, and Leon and his wife had made the necessary preparations for attending the masked ball, and now awaited the hour of ten o'clock. The servant announced the carriage in waiting, when Leon, who had been complaining during the day of a slight indisposition, felt the symptoms of his malady increase, and declared his intention to remain at home.

Inez commenced unwinding the rebose from her beautiful head and shoulders.

"No, Inez, you shall not remain—the carriage will let you down at the house of Luisa—she will look to you——"

Inez objected.

"Go," continued Leon, "or I shall be forced to accompany you at the risk of my health—go, dearest Inez, for I shall certainly not remain at your expense."

The young wife kissed her husband, and half reluctantly entering her carriage, was driven to the house of her friend. The general returned to his chamber, and after taking some medicine that stood upon the side-table, threw himself heavily upon his bed, but not to sleep.

There was a large assemblage at the house of the rich widow. Dona Luisa was still beautiful, a belle, and one of the leaders of fashion. Her house was the resort of the elegant and intriguing society of the Mexican capital. Inez was lost in the gay whirl of fashion. The life of domestic seclusion which she led as the wife of Leon, had wholly unfitted her for such society, and after two or three unsuccessful attempts to enjoy herself among the votaries of pleasure, she retired to a seat on one of the balconies that opened upon the gardens. Here she undid her mask, and breathed in the fresh air that came laden with the perfume of a thousand flowers. Leaning against the railing of the balcony, she sat gazing out upon a fountain that rippled and sparkled beneath the clear moonlight. She had not remained long in this position, when a form glided from among the dancers and dropped into a seat near her, and directly opposite. This person was disguised in a mask and black domino, but the voice was that of a man.

"Why so pensive, lady? Are you wearied with the dance already?"

"Sir!" said Inez, starting, for she had not until now perceived that she was not alone.

"You seem to take but little pleasure in these masquerading revels? One so beautiful as you—perhaps some memories of happier days——"

"Sir," muttered Inez, with indignation in her tone and manner, "I would be alone—will you favor me by seeking some other on whom to lavish your cheap flattery—leave me, sir!"

As she said this she re-adjusted her mask, which till now she had been holding in her hand.

"Ah! cruel—cruel Inez." A deep sigh escaped from the stranger. Inez started, and turning a scrutinizing look upon the disguised figure, said in a half whisper—

"Who are you, sir, that you know me?"

"Who does not know the beautiful Inez Leon? I once knew Inez de Mora, knew her in her happy hours of childhood—in her spring of bright womanhood, when she would not thus have repelled—Inez, Inez, would that I had never known you!"

"Oh! Sir—Fernando—spare me—leave me."

"I will, Inez, but not now—one moment—one short respite from the agony of six years—one hour of that delirious joy your presence produces."

"Oh! Fernando, if you love me—if you ever loved me, be generous—leave me—leave me!"

"Loved you, Inez?—for six long years since that fatal night when you became a living sacrifice to wealth, to the idol of a parent's sacrifice—have I banished myself from you—but never could I banish your image from my heart—in the camp—in the battle-field—through the long campaign your memory has sustained me—the memory of our young love—but now to return to see you once again—to hear you pronounce my name—to press——"

"Nay, do not—Fernando, for your life. Oh! let us part forever—forever!"

"In one hour I shall go hence—perhaps never to return—do not deny me the only solace of long suffering years—tell me, Inez—tell me, do you still love me?"

"Oh! it is sinful."

"It was sinful to rob me of my rightful love. Say it, Inez—give me at least this consolation—it will cheer me through the absent hours—say it, Inez."

Inez was for a moment silent struggling with her feelings. The tone, the manner of the young man was one of extreme agony, and it touched her to the heart. Would she suffer him to depart without this assurance, to him so dear? To her how little did it cost?—how little? Not little. In this lay the secret of her melancholy life. Love struggled with duty. The strife was soon over. Leaning forward, so that her face almost touched the mask of the stranger, she whispered in a trembling voice—

"Fernando, my heart is unchanged."

The young officer started with a thrill of delight, and in the wild gush of passionate excitement, he caught the small, white hand half unresisting, and carried it to his lips.

A dark figure interposed—a strong arm struck the hand from his lips, a deep curse was heard from the intruder, who seizing the slender waist of Inez, hurried her from the house. The wheels of a carriage rattled along the pavement and stopped at the house of General Leon.

The young man did not awake from his surprise until Inez had disappeared. It was too late to follow. He who had carried her off had, doubtless, the right. Strange consolation.

Leon sat in the hall of his house, apparently reading the "Diario." His thoughts were not upon the paper or the matter it contained. The stern and rigid look—the compression of his thin lips, spoke of some secret and firm resolve. At intervals his glance turned upon a small door, which opened toward his wife's chamber. It was late in the day, and Inez had not yet made her appearance. He had sent for her. The door at length opened, and the young wife entered the room pale and suffering, but through her anguish their shone a look of proud innocence. She seated herself upon a sofa without turning her eyes upon her husband. There was a painful moment of silence interrupted by Leon.

"You have broken down in one moment the hopes, the confidence which it had taken years to establish—you have destroyed the only illusion of my miserable life—you have betrayed the sacred——"

"Sir——"

"Nay—nay—explanations are of no use now—thinkest thou I have neither eyes nor ears?—thinkest thou that I am likely to play the fool of a doting husband?—no, madam, your intrigue has ended—and your villainous paramour has not another day to live—for you I shall take better care of hereafter."

A stifled scream of anguish—a proud look of defiance, such only as wronged and insulted innocence can give, was the only reply.

Leon gazed for a moment upon his beautiful wife—in his eyes now too painfully beautiful, and with a stride of bitter determination he left the room. As he passed out of the great doorway the porter, at a sign from his master, locked the gate and disappeared. Every house in Mexico is a prison. Inez was a prisoner.

Leon strode on chafing with himself as he went. A carriage stood ready in the plazza of the village. Entering this, he ordered the driver to take him to the city. The carriage stopped in front of a large hotel in the Calle Correo. Leon, by inquiry, had ascertained that here the young officer of his last night's adventure stopped. He descended from the carriage, and without asking any questions from the porter, passed in and walked up stairs. In a few seconds he found the room occupied by the object of his search.

The young man started up from a table where he had been engaged in writing, and confronted his visitor, whose want of ceremony at entering somewhat surprised him.

"Who are you, sir?" asked the officer.

"That you shall know in time—first let me make secure against your escape."

Leon locked the door, putting the key in his pocket, from which he drew forth a pair of pistols.

"Do you mean to assassinate me?" asked the young man, in a tone of deliberate calmness.

"Sir, I am a gentleman, although you are not—choose one of these pistols."

"And for what?"

"That you will understand when I remind you of your base conduct at the masquerade."

"General Leon—for I presume you are he—reflect, sir—you do me a wrong."

"Take the pistol, sir."

"I cannot fight you, sir."

"Cannot!—you are a coward, sir, as well as a scoundrel—take the weapon, sir, and do not make me a murderer."

"I am no coward, General Leon."

"Then, sir, act like a man."

"You shall have your wish."

Almost involuntarily the young officer took one of the pistols from the hand of his adversary and stepped back. The breadth of the room, about six paces, separated them. "One—two—three—fire!" These words were hastily uttered by Leon, and with the last the bullet from his pistol harmlessly passed the head of his adversary and lodged in the wall.

"If you wish to try it again I will change pistols with you—mine is still loaded."

Leon gnashed his teeth with rage, as he flung his pistol upon the floor; then grasping his sword, he drew it, and called upon the officer to "fire and defend himself." Fernando flung the loaded pistol upon the table, and drawing his sword stood on the defence. After a few passes, the sword of Leon fell upon the floor. Thus foiled and disarmed in a double sense, Leon ran toward the table for the remaining pistol, intending to use it on himself. By some fatality his eye fell upon the paper at which Fernando had been writing, and which he saw was addressed to himself. He read—

"General Leon—Sir—You may slight any explanation of the occurrence of last night. I do not wish to absolve myself. The friendship—the love of a whole life found its first expression for six years in that moment of imprudence for your wife. She is innocent—innocent of any anticipation of that meeting—innocent of having given any consent to the rude liberty of which you were the witness. I alone am guilty—on me then let fall the consequences.

El Capitan Fernando."

Leon crushed the paper into his pocket, and rushed from the room.

About three years after the occurrences detailed above, one of those revolutions so common in Mexico broke out, and civil war raged in the capital of that devoted country.

It was mid-winter, and General Leon was residing in his house in the city, a fine palace in the Calle Cadenas. Time, which softens and subdues the keenest pangs, had mellowed his sufferings, and if not happy, he had ceased to suffer the deep agony which he had felt after the occurrence of the masquerade. The zeal and devotedness of Inez—her attention to his slightest wishes, had in some degree restored confidence, if not happiness to his health, and the circumstances of the adventure at Tacubaya were never alluded to.

In the city of Mexico, in civil revolutions, men do their fighting from the cupolas of churches and convents, and from the roofs of their houses.

Among other houses that it became necessary for one of the contending parties to occupy with troops, was that of Leon. A company of soldiers had entered below at the great gate, which, having securely barricaded, they ascended to the azotia. This they occupied for several days, contending with their adversaries, who occupied some buildings at a distance.

The soldiers came down by turns into the house to cook their food, but in spite of all the invitations of Leon, their captain, whom Leon had never seen, refused to descend to the table. On the first day several wounded men were carried down from the roof, and attended by the servants of the general with the utmost care. Others were carried down on the following day. It was at last reported that the captain of the party had received a severe—perhaps a mortal wound—but still refused to leave his post on the azotia. Hearing this Leon used every entreaty, sending servant after servant to prevail upon the wounded officer to abandon his dangerous position and enter his house. The captain at length consented, his wound becoming worse. He was carried down into a chamber and placed upon one of the couches, where the old general and his servants attended upon him. Every hour brought the wounded man nearer his end. In those wasted and attenuated features—wasted not alone by wounds and loss of blood—General Leon did not recognize the Captain Fernando. A truer instinct taught the Dona Inez who was their guest. She leaned for a moment over the couch, and then fell lifeless upon the almost lifeless form of her first and only love. She was scarcely carried from the apartment when Captain Fernando breathed his last.

A few short years and Leon, broken-hearted, found rest in the grave. Inez preceded him, but hers was the grave of the maniac.

THE VILLAGE GOSSIPS.

BY J. S. BELL

THE rays of the setting sun, which had deserted the vallies below, still lingered upon the heights above the village of S——, as if loth to quit a scene so rich in every element of rural beauty, and bathed in an atmosphere of gold the form of a young hunter, who stood leaning on his rifle and gazing upon the summer sunset. Though covered by a canopy of richly tinted clouds, the glowing orb had strength enough to struggle through the vapor, and, to the right and left, as far as the eye could reach, hundreds of mountain pinnacles received the mellow radiance on their leaf-crowned summits, which shone as if covered with myriads of gems, sparkling with countless, varied hues of golden green. Gradually, as the quivering rays grew fainter, the emerald tints assumed a deeper dye; one by one the dying peaks were forced to lose their short-lived splendors, the dusky shades of evening crept upward like huge ghosts along the mountain side, and the whole of the bright prospect faded away into the uniform gray of summer twilight. Our young hunter, whose spirit was attuned in unison with nature's sweetest harmonies, felt all the influence of the peaceful scene, and, fixing his eyes upon the full-orbed moon which had just begun to illuminate the Eastern heavens, sank into a pensive reverie

Not many minutes had elapsed, when the stillness of the forest was interrupted by a strain of music, so clear, so soft, so exquisitely sweet, that the solitary listener was half disposed to think that it proceeded from some tuneful Sylph, rather than from one of mortal mould; and this fancy was not dissipated when, by cautiously stealing round a little thicket of underwood, he beheld the singer. It was a young and lovely maiden, who had been sportively decorating herself with such a profusion of wild flowers, woven into such a variety of fantastic wreaths and many colored garlands, that it would not have required any great luxuriance of imagination to have converted her into a wood-nymph or a sylvan goddess, or even into one of the "tuneful Nine." She sat upon a moss grown rock, with her head thrown back against a tree, and had doubtless been gazing upon the glorious sunset, until her rapturous admiration overflowed in the sweet strains of the "evening hymn," which now vibrated on her lips. Her flower-besprinkled hair fell about her shoulders in rich, luxurant tresses, and wherever an ebon ringlet was lifted by the Summer breeze, it disclosed a skin of dazzling whiteness, which was only rivalled in purity by the pearls displayed within the ruby casket of her parted lips. The color of her eyes could not be seen, but they must have been charming beyond comparison if their beauty could much excel that of the snowy lids and jetty lashes by which their orbs were shaded

Our young hunter was rooted to the spot where he stood with surprise and admiration. Though not a resident in the village of S——, he had been a frequent visitor to its beautiful valley, and he knew that though it could boast of many pretty faces, it never numbered among its daughters any one that could be at all compared with the vision of transcendent loveliness which had been so suddenly revealed to his astonished gaze. "Dazzled and drunk with beauty," he lost all consciousness of surrounding objects, and surrendered both eyes and ears to that magic influence which from that moment was to rule his destiny.

The brief limits which we have assigned to our little tale will not allow us to enlarge upon the interview which now took place between the youth and maiden; we will merely give the reader some idea of its results, both immediate and more remote. Unlike very many of those beauties which captivate "at first sight," Alice Masdyn had a soul which did not dishonor the beauteous temple in which it was enshrined, and when young Allowby, the hunter, found means to consummate the acquaintance so romantically begun, his reason fully ratified the choice his eyes had made so rashly on the Lurra mountain.

Alice was on a visit to her aunt, Mrs. Trippe, who was one of the female magnates of S——, and, on the evening above referred to, had been strolling on the mountain, with a party of young people, after visiting a mineral spring which had often afforded an excuse for simlar rambles to the more juvenile portion of the population. In her eager search for some rare flower which was said to be a denizen of Mount Lurra, she had wandered from her companions, until, overcome by fatigue, she had thrown herself upon the rock where George Allowby found her. He accompanied her home, and three weeks afterward, by the same moss-covered rock, after witnessing a similar sunset, she hid her burning blushes in the bosom of an accepted lover—an affianced husband.

Time rolled on, and the wedding day was fixed. It was to take place in S——, and under the auspices of her aunt; for Alice was an orphan, and entirely dependent upon her own exertions for a livelihood, with the exception of the little assistance that could be given by her only brother, a lieutenant in the navy.

It was late in the afternoon of a beautiful day in October, that Alice, with her friend and expectant bridesmaid, Julia Cramer, arrived on her second visit at the village of S——. She had never looked more beautiful, for her heart was full of hope and joy, and it glowed on her cheek and danced in her happy eyes. She was to meet George Allowby, who had been called to the South by important business, a few weeks before, and the marriage was to be solemnized as soon as possible.

"Where is George?" asked Alice, of her cousin Sarah, the moment she alighted.

"He is not here," was the brief response.

"Not here, cousin!"

"He is not in S——."

Poor Alice trembled excessively, and was hardly able to enter the house. Her aunt and her cousin Margaret received her with a coldness which increased her anxiety, until it amounted to positive terror, and, when the former put a sealed letter into her hand, her emotion was such that she was utterly unable to open it. With a convulsive grasp which smothered the words her lips were striving to articulate, she handed the letter to Julia Cramer, who managed to break the seal, though her sympathizing heart had rendered her fingers almost as powerless as those of her friend. Alice placed the open sheet upon her lap, brushed away the tears which were starting into her eyes, and, almost the next moment, with that awful shriek which is the death-knell of a breaking heart, fell backward on the floor, devoid of sense or motion. Poor Julia was so much affected herself as to be unable to assist her friend, but Mrs. Trippe and her daughters were "strong minded women," and were never known, in all their lives, to manifest one atom of emotion beyond what was strictly decorous and "proper." They accordingly proceeded, with all due deliberation, to do what was necessary for the restoration of their kinsman, and, after she had somewhat recovered, took the earliest opportunity to inform her that it was altogether desirable that she should return to the place whence she came with all convenient promptitude.

The wretched girl was so stupified with what she had just read, that she was incapable of acting for herself, and hardly able to understand what was said to her. Her friend Julia, indignant at the conduct of her aunt and cousins, which she considered unfeeling under any possible circumstances, took the unhappy maiden by the arm and hurried her away. In their route to the stage-office—whence a return coach was fortunately about to start—they encountered several persons, who had, within a few weeks, been among the most devoted of Alice's "dear five hundred friends." A stare of cold and pitiless curiosity was the only token of recognition they had now to bestow upon the miserable creature who had dared to forfeit the good will of her rich relations But how? That was the very question that Julia Cramer had been asking to no purpose for the last half hour. Poor Alice! all she knew about it was contained in the bitterly laconic epistle of George Allowby, and that, indeed, was all she cared to know. In those few words, incomprehensible as they were, lay concealed the material of a life-long agony; and as the ear which has been deafened by a thunderbolt becomes insensible to all minor sounds, so did this grief-stricken soul disregard all sorrows less poignant than that which at one fell stroke had blighted all its budding hopes forever. The letter contained merely these words:—

"Madam—Your own conscience will tell you why it is that you can henceforth be nothing more than a stranger to George Allowby."

The two young ladies were sitting in the stage-office, and, with a cheek flushed with indignation, Julia Cramer was crushing in her hand the fatal paper which she had just perused. At this moment the coach drove up, and Alice, with great difficulty, managed to reach it, supported by the arm of her friend. They were hardly seated, when a rabble rout of boys surrounded the carriage, hooting and screaming.

"Stop thief!—stop thief! There's the woman what stole the gloves from Smith's store! Thief!—thief!"

The driver cracked his whip, but, before the coach could be started, a handful of mud and gravel was flung into the window, and, tearing away the gossamer veil, came rudely into contact with the soft cheek of Alice Masdyn. Alas! what a change for the petted, caressed, and almost worshipped darling of two little weeks ago! Alas, what a shock for the peculiarly refined and sensitive feelings of one who was "the very soul of honor!" And what had done this? The wretched, idle, gossiping, slanderous, lying tongues of half a dozen "busy-bodies!"

Poor Alice was taken to the house of Mrs. Cramer, Julia's mother, where she remained in a state of imbecility, mental and bodily, having never recovered from the shock produced by that fatal letter. About a fortnight after this occurrence, Lieutenant Masdyn returned somewhat unexpectedly, from the Pacific, to find his beloved, his almost idolized sister, a miserable, mindless wreck. The sight almost drove him to distraction, and, if Allowby had been within his reach, there would probably have been another and a bloodier act to be added to our tragedy. Fortunately for all parties the faithless lover was not to be found; he had sailed for Europe almost immediately after leaving S——, and Masdyn could not leave his sister to pursue him. The lieutenant's next object was to trace the foul slander to its source, and, unpleasant as was the task, he resolved to undertake it without a moment's delay, and for that purpose went immediately to S——.

The first inquiry was made of Mr. Smith, the storekeeper. He informed the young officer that he had lost several pairs of gloves from his store, and, after a close cross-examination, he confessed that he had heard it reported that Miss Masdyn had taken them; but he denied most positively that he had ever said so, or that he had ever in any way given currency to the rumor. The lieutenant next called upon Mrs. Trippe. She received him with a triple proportion of stateliness, and informed him that she was most unwillingly compelled to say that there could be no doubt of his sister's guilt, since she had received her information from her very particular friend, Mrs. Harbottle, who had kindly taken upon herself the melancholy duty of acquainting her with a fact which had long been notorious among the inhabitants of S——, viz: that her niece had in several instances purloined gloves and other articles from the store of Mr. Smith, and had even had the effrontery to confess it in the presence of several highly respectable ladies.

Young Masdyn, with great difficulty, controlled his indignation during this interview with Mrs. Trippe, and felt that he could not trust himself to say a single

word in reply; he, therefore, took his leave as soon as she had done speaking, and bent his steps to the residence of Mrs. Harbottle. This lady was all politeness, and all regret, and assured the young gentleman that nothing but the imperative call of duty and of conscience would have induced her to assume the unpleasant task of informing Mrs. Trippe of the real state of the case. Masdyn cut her short in the midst of a most pathetic *jeremaid*, and requested her to tell him exactly and precisely what she knew about the matter, and whence she derived her information. It was no easy thing to confine her to such narrow limits, but she was eventually brought to confess that she knew nothing about the affair, except what she had learned from Miss Penderly, and that she could not remember that Miss Penderly had said anything about repeated thefts, but she had told her that there were six pairs of gloves stolen, and that Miss Masdyn had confessed that she took them; in whose presence the confession was made she did not know.

Miss Penderly was stiff and solemn. She would have been "not at home," only the young officer happened to get a sight of her as she was reconnoitering through the parlor window. She declared positively that Mrs. Harbottle had misrepresented her, for she had only spoken of *three* pairs of gloves, and that she had received her information from Mr. Plush, the apothecary.

Rejoiced that he had found a *man* to deal with at last, Lieutenant Masdyn hastened to the shop of Mr. Plush; but a disappointment awaited him, for the man of drugs was not at home, and he would probably be absent for several days. The mistress of the establishment, however, in the course of certain remarks which she thought proper to make, gave our young officer to understand that Mr. Plush had received his account of the matter from Mrs. Hackley, over the way, and to Mrs. Hackley he went forthwith. She declared solemnly that she had been belied among them somewhere, for she was willing to take her oath that she had spoken to Plush of *one* pair of gloves, and only one, and she had told him the very same story that Miss Twayley had told her.

We would fatigue our readers to little purpose were we to follow the movements of Lieutenant Masdyn from Miss Twayley to Mrs. Bean, from Mrs. Bean to Mrs. Wrench, and from Mrs. Wrench to Miss Polly Carraway; suffice it to say that Miss Polly informed him that Mrs. Bittles, from whom she had her information, had told her that she had heard the thing from Mrs. Fyler, who had heard Miss Masdyn confess it.

Believing that h· had now arrived at something tangible, the lieutenant knocked at the door of Mrs. Bittles, but to his great mortification he found that this lady, one of the most important links in this chain of abominations, was not to be found. Mrs. Fyler, however, was at home, but she positively denied having ever said what was attributed to her by Mrs. Bittles. She had told Mrs. Bittles that Mrs. Carboy had told her that on one occasion while walking in the street behind Miss Masdyn and Miss Anna McLush, she had heard the former say something to the latter about *stealing a pair of gloves*. The poor lieutenant gave a groan of mingled vexation and exhaustion. His patience was sorely tried, but he was determined to ferret out the root of the matter, and, therefore, proceeded to hire a horse and ride out to Mrs. Carboy's.

The last named lady talked very loud, and talked a great deal, for the purpose of making it appear that she was a saint, and her dear friend, Mrs. Fyler, not a bit better than she should be, since "she had said that she said what she did not say." She had simply told Mrs. Fyler that she had heard Miss Masdyn say something to Miss McLush about *gloves and steel!*

The lieutenant now posted back to S—— to take the deposition of Miss Anna McLush, which was in substance as follows: the day before Miss Masdyn left the village she had accompanied her to Smith's store, where they had each of them purchased a pair of gloves, and on their return to Mrs. Trippe's, Alice had made the remark—"*these gloves are as tough as steel!*"

We have little more to tell. Lieutenant Masdyn compelled the slanderers of his sister to make a public statement of the truth; but it was too late, for on the very day that George Allowby returned from Europe a pale and conscience-stricken man, the spirit of Alice Masdyn "returned to God who gave it."

THE VILLAGE PASTOR.

BY MRS. NANNIE SMITH.

AH! who is it that does not love the good old village pastor, with his silvery locks and his pale, care-worn brow? Time has traced upon that brow many furrows, but it has not yet dimmed the lustre of his eye, quenched the brightness of his intellect, nor crushed his noble spirit. And yet sorrows like mountains have weighed upon his existence!

No ambitious dreams can tempt or lure him from the little flock that has so long looked up to him for guidance and instruction. No, he is content to dwell in an humble sphere, and teach an honorable and devout flock. Though many fascinating temptations are held out to him, to take a wider field of labor, where worldly honors lie thickly scattered round, yet the love of his little flock, and a knowledge of the frailty of humanity prevent him from yielding to their alluring charms; knowing that worldly honors, like the deadly Upas tree, that blasts everything that comes within its sphere, often take possession of the immortal mind, and root out its longings and aspirations for celestial glory.

It was a bright summer evening! The sun was sinking to repose in the far-off West, tipping the trees and hills and spire of our village church with a rosy tinge. Not a cloud dimmed the deep blue Heavens; not a harsh sound floated on the air; and not a breeze stirred the surrounding rich green foliage. The laborer had ceased to toil, and sat beside his loving wife, watching the gamboling of his darling little ones upon the green lawn in front of his dwelling; and as I listened to their ringing shouts and merry laughter, my heart seemed full of tender emotions, for the days of childhood came rushing back to my mind. After advancing some little distance, I sat myself down to muse on the bright, the sunny, happy days of youth, which this lovely scene brought to mind, when no sorrow hung in life's serene and peaceful sky. But scarce had I seated myself upon the green sward, before a sound of melody greeted my ear, as if breathed by angel lips, that aroused me from my reverie. I listened, and again the gushing music of a rich, soft voice, from the direction of the old parsonage, that lay to my right amid a cluster of trees a short distance off, came lightly floating on the air. I started up, and bent my steps thitherward, hoping, by screening myself by the shrubbery, to get nearer the fair minstrel without being observed. As I approached this little earthly Paradise, a simplicity and neatness which ever characterized the parsonage, struck my mind forcibly; and, with the poet, I exclaimed involuntarily to myself—

"If there is peace to be found in the world,
A heart that is humble might hope for it here."

It was indeed a charming spot. A neat, white cottage lay there nestled amid roses, woodbines, honeysuckles and hyacinths—fit dwelling-place, methought, for innocence and loveliness. I drank deep of that melody: but, alas! too soon it ceased. It was the vesper hymn chaunted by a fair girl of scarce sixteen summers to her father. Now all was silent—the music had ceased, and the fairy looking being that had awakened those notes that melted on the soul so feelingly had departed; and yet I did not leave that spot; for I felt as if chained to it by some magic spell. Then thought, deep thought, took possession of my mind, and I found myself wandering over the history of that good village pastor, whom I had been taught to revere from my days of childhood. From his earliest manhood he had been "a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief." Though comfortably situated as far as it regards the common necessaries of life, and living in the hearts of all who knew him; for, truly, "none knew him but to love him"—yet he had seen his children, one after another, drop to earth as the leaves from the trees beneath an autumn sky. And at last she that had been his partner and solace in sorrow, sickened and died also. This seemed to fill his cup of bitterness to overflowing; yet he did not chide the hand that laid upon him "the chastening rod." He would say, "the Lord giveth and the Lord taketh away: blessed be the name of the Lord." All that bound him now to earth, by kindred ties, was a daughter, over whom he still watched with the most tender solicitude. With what care did he train her budding and expanding mind, fearing that he would scarce be able to catch the fragrance from *that* frail flower, ere death would come and nip it too. Truly he trained her up in the way she should go, for she seemed to hover round the poor and distressed of the village like a ministering angel, soothing the afflicted and broken-hearted; and administering to every want of her aged parent. Who could blame him for thinking her his earthly treasure? None, for such an one is valued above rubies. I had been musing upon the incidents of this history for some time, when a sound fell upon my ear like the voice of supplication, at which I started up half frightened from the spot where I had lingered so long in abstracted thought. For ere this the sun had sunk to sleep, and "gray twilight" had dissolved into the sable folds of night; and myriads of bright stars, and the silvery moon gemmed the brow of Heaven. A light now broke upon my vision through a small window fronting me, as the voice of the pastor, (for it was he) in words of adoration, fell pleasingly on the entranced senses; and I now approached nearer where I could command a view of the inmates. Reader, I would not have thee think me an eve's dropper, and I would ask thee to forgive me for the

act; for an irresistible power impelled me forward. I drew near to the small window, and beheld through it, by the aid of the solitary but brilliant taper that lighted up the apartment, a scene that angels delight to behold, and mortals witness with awe profound! On the little stand, in the centre of the room, lay an open Bible, near which two figures knelt in humble and devout prayer to the keeper of spirits, and the dispenser of blessings. What a striking contrast was here presented! A young girl, with her small white hands clasped—her blooming cheeks and rosy lips—her fair brow, upon which time had set no signet of care, her soft blue eyes upturned to Heaven—her golden tresses falling carelessly over her fair shoulders, and her gently heaving bosom, as it gave utterance to the silent, yet eloquent appeals to her father and God, encircled by a simple robe of white muslin, which fell in graceful folds round her kneeling form, seemed all the mind could picture of loveliness and goodness. Then, the old man, with his white and flowing locks—his pale, furrowed brow—his trembling hands clasped, and his deep, sonorous voice of burning eloquence melting on the evening air in untold sweetness, struck the beholder with unutterable beauty and sublimity. Oh, what a picture of loveliness was here presented! What a contrast! what an example to mankind! age and youth, where purity and innocence seemed to dwell, mingling the voice of supplication together! As I gazed upon the scene my heart softened and seemed to melt within me. The prayer ceased, and all again was silent.

I now turned away from this hallowed spot a better being, and silently retraced my footsteps, saying to myself, surely there is a truth in the religion of Jesus Christ, and if those who seem purity and innocence itself need repentance, how will it be at the day of reckoning with the sinful!

How will it?

A WASHING DAY EXPERIENCE.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "SAVING AT THE SPIGGOT."

"My dear," said I, one Monday morning, as ominous washing day indications met my eyes, "why don't you put out the washing? I'm sure it would be a great deal better."

"Do you know what it would cost?" returned my wife, a little sharply, for, it being Monday, the influence of the day was already beginning to be felt.

"I don't know, exactly, how much it would cost," I replied; "but I do know, that it would be a great saving."

"A saving of what?"

"Of comfort, if of nothing else."

"Dear bought comfort you would soon find it."

"How much does the washing cost now?" I inquired.

"Sixty-two and a half cents," was answered.

"Is that all?"

"Yes. That is all I pay Hester for a day's work, and she does the whole of it in a day."

"But you forget that you have to board her," said I.

"And what is that?" returned my wife. "Her board costs nothing. One mouth more in the family is not felt."

"I am not altogether sure of that. Didn't you tell me, this morning, to get a pound or two more of meat for dinner, as the washerwoman was here?"

"You don't suppose she will eat two pounds of meat for dinner?" said my wife.

"I don't know anything about that. All I know is, that, for the reason you stated, I gave twenty cents more for meat then I would otherwise have paid. It's all the same whether she eats it or not. The extra expense is chargeable to her being in the house. A very reasonable addition for the cost of Hester's breakfast and supper, is twenty-five cents. These two items added, and you have, instead of sixty-two and a half cents as the cost of washing, the sum of a dollar and seven cents."

"And it would cost at least a dollar and seventy-five cents a week to put it out."

"Is that all?" I asked, rather surprised at the smallness of the sum. "Only a dollar and seventy-five cents."

"More likely it would cost two dollars."

"Which would not be much more than it costs us now," said I.

"Although, by your own showing, you made it about half that sum just now."

"Yes, but I am not done yet. There are a few more items to add. There is fire, which I will put down at a shilling, and soap, starch and indigo at as much more. Then comes the wear and tear of tubs, washing-boards, clothes-lines and pins, to say nothing of temper, all of which I will estimate at another eighth of a dollar. Breakage, consequent upon cook and chambermaids' ill-temper, the derangement of the household, and anarchical privileges of children, will not be covered, on an average, by a less sum than twenty-five cents. This swells the cost of washing per week to a dollar and seventy cents under the present system."

"Breakage! It's preposterous!" said my wife.

"Not at all. Don't you remember when Nancy slipped on the stairs where one of the children had lain a piece of the washerwoman's soap, and broke five dollars worth of things at one *smash?*"

"That's only a single case, and might have happened at any other time as well as on a washing day."

"And don't you remember the handsome wash pitcher Jane demolished in a washing-day fever, thus ruining a set that cost us ten dollars. As for tumblers, cups, saucers and plates, there is no end to their destruction on these occasions. And for a very plain reason. The breakfast-table stands in the floor until dinner time; and the dinner-table until supper time. Nobody has leisure to clear anything away; and there being nobody to attend to the children, they rummage about, with their hands into everything, and, as a natural consequence, there is no end to the destruction that accompanies their movements. Fifty cents a week, instead of twenty-five, would be a near approach to the loss we suffer from the cause."

"You might talk that at me until doomsday, and I wouldn't——"

A loud crash of broken dishes came up from the kitchen at this instant.

"Gracious!" exclaimed my wife. "What is that?" and she left my side in a twinkling, to investigate the cause and learn the extent of this new crockery disaster. I did not wait to ascertain the result; but decamped for my place of business, fondly hoping that what I had said, enforced so timely by a serious washing-day breakage, would have the desired effect.

At dinner time I went home in that delightful state of doubt as to the reception I should meet, which most men feel on like occasions. The first sound that saluted my ear as I entered, was the crying of one of the children; and instead of that savory odor of dinner, so grateful to a hungry man, I snuffed up a humid atmosphere, loaded almost to suffocation with the vapor of soap and ley. I passed the dining-room, but the table was not set. I went up into my wife's room; as I opened the door I was greeted with this exclamation—

"There! I knew it would be so! I don't believe Hannah has put a potatoe on to cook yet, although I sent her word an hour ago that it was time to see about dinner. But she has been as cross as she could be all the morning."

"She's been helping wash, I suppose," said I.

"Of course she has. She always does so. But, it's as easy to stop and get dinner at one time as another. I never saw such creatures. I wish you would ring that bell."

I did as desired. It was answered by the chambermaid.

"Go down and see what under the sun keeps Hannah back with her dinner."

The chambermaid retired, and, in a little while came back with word that the fire had all gone out, and that Hannah was just making it up again.

"Oh, dear!" said I, half involuntarily, drawing out my watch, and looking at the time. "It's nearly half past two, now, and I have an engagement at a quarter past three. I cannot possibly wait."

"It shall be ready in a little while," said my wife, looking distressed. "I'll go down and see to it. To think that girl would do so. But, it is always so on washing-days. Nothing goes right, and there is no comfort in the house."

To that sentiment I could have uttered an audible "amen." But, I deemed it prudent, just at that particular juncture, to observe a perfect silence.

Sooner than I expected, the bell rung, and I went down to the dining-room. I found my wife awaiting me at the table, with flushed and heated countenance, and many evidences of worry and excitement. She had cleared Hannah out of the kitchen, set the fire a going with her own hands, and cooked the dinner. But, she couldn't eat a mouthful, and my appetite was, by this time, among the things that were. I helped the children, and offered to help my wife, but she declined everything. After forcing a few mouthfuls down my throat, I left the table and my unhappy family, and retired to my place of business, feeling in no pleasant mood myself.

"And all this is to be borne and suffered once a week for the meagre saving of twenty or thirty cents—perhaps nothing! I must use my veto power; must bring into exercise my reserved rights, and I will do it. Suppose it cost a dollar a week more to put out the washing, what of that? Five dollars wouldn't pay for having the nuisance retained in the house."

Full of this resolution, I went home that evening. Things had resumed their old and more orderly appearance; for the spirit of discord—the washing-day fiend—had taken her departure. Still, my wife looked sober. The day had been one of great trial. I said nothing during the evening about an arrangement in the future such as I had proposed; but on the next night I alluded to the subject. Strange to say, my wife would not hear to it, and her objection was urged on the score of expense.

"It will not cost a cent less than two dollars a week to have them rough dried out of the house, and I cannot think of paying that."

"But, my dear, it costs nearly that to have the washing done at home."

"Oh, no. Not half of it."

"But I showed you, by a careful estimate of the true cost, that it did."

"That was a forced estimate. I know it doesn't cost over a dollar a week, every farthing counted. And to throw away fifty-two dollars a year is not to be thought of."

"Fifty-two dollars a year, laid out to secure the happiness and comfort of our whole family, for fifty-two days, is not a waste of money, by any means."

"But we can't afford it. Our income is not large."

"Suppose, then, we drop off two or three ice-creams, and a few other little nick-nackeries a week, that we can very easily do without, and get in exchange therefore a day of comfort."

But, it was useless for me to argue with my wife. She had a dozen reasons, all perfectly conclusive to her mind, why it wouldn't do to put the washing out. She understood the matter, and I knew nothing about it.

I had made up my mind, however, that the thing was to be done, for long suffering had worn out my patience.

"I'll stand the expense," said I to myself, "and not be much out of pocket either."

On the following morning I had occasion to go into the cellar to make up a fire in the furnace. A gentle tap loosened the hoops on a washing-tub, and I had a choice lot of "kindling." I was exceedingly liberal in its use, consuming every vestige! On the next morning, another tub performed the same important service, and on that which succeeded, I split up the washing-board, and gave six dozen clothes-pins, and a couple of clothes-lines, to the devouring flames.

On Saturday, I informed my wife of what I had done. You may suppose that she lifted her eyes, and grew pale with astonishment. But seeing me so earnest about the matter, she made but little opposition; and on Monday I had the supreme delight of seeing all things in order, and sitting down to a comfortable breakfast, dinner and supper with a smiling wife and happy children. The dollar and seventy-five cents which it costs, weekly, to have all our washing done out of the house, I pay with more cheerfulness, and with a more perfect consciousness of getting my money's worth, than I do any other bill that comes. And as to its costing any more to put out the washing than to have it done, in the house, I don't believe a word of it. Fire couldn't burn it into me. On this point, my wife and I are directly at issue. Strange to say, she has a kind of hankering after the old order of things, and if I were not so positive about the matter, I verily believe old Hester would be back again in less than a month. But I stand on my reserved rights here, firm and immoveable; and there you will find me a dozen years hence, if I live. There are no more washing-days in my house. I have banished the spirit of disorder.

THE YOUNG HOUSEKEEPER.

BY F. E. F., AUTHOR OF A "MARRIAGE OF CONVENIENCE," "AARON'S ROD," &C.

"Do, Fanny, have some fire made," said Mr. Taylor to his wife, "I am almost perished."

"Fire," she repeated.

"Yes, fire," said he. "I am sure it's cold enough. My teeth are fairly chattering."

"It's rather chilly," she replied. "But the grates are cleaned, and the summer blowers up. I can't have a fire made."

"Oh, nonsense," urged her husband. "What if the grates are cleaned? Do ring and order a fire."

But the young wife never stirred as she answered, "It's out of the question, Charles. The chimnies are closed up."

"Pshaw," said he, impatiently. "What on earth did you have the chimnies closed for? Tom can take the filling out though, I suppose," he continued, as he moved toward the bell.

"No, indeed, he can't," interposed his wife quickly. "What are you thinking of?—he'll raise such a dust! And beside I can't have a fire made indeed. The paint is still fresh, and the white-wash scarce dried, and when things are once cleaned, fires make such a dirt."

"Then I do wish you would not have things cleaned till the necessity for fires is over," said her husband, somewhat vexed. "But you are always in such a hurry with your house-cleaning," he continued, pettishly. "I do hate the sight of a pail of water most devoutly. I am sure the house was clean enough before."

"Clean!" exclaimed his wife, "I don't know what you call clean! I am sure I was ashamed to have any one come in it looked so smoky and dirty. But you men seem to have no perception of dirt," she continued, almost contemptuously. "And it's not so cold either."

"What are you wrapped up in that great shawl then for?" answered her husband.

"Oh, it is rather chilly certainly. A heavy rain like this makes it cold of course. We are liable to such storms in mid summer," she replied.

"It's an absurdity to close up the grates at this season," muttered her husband.

"At this season, Charles! Why it's not cold. Only look at the peach blossoms," she continued, pointing to the tree in the garden in proof of her assertion.

"Well, I wish I was a peach blossom," he replied, "if they are insensible to the weather. Since I can't have a fire, however, I'll put on my overcoat."

"Do," she replied. And he left the room, and returned presently buttoned up to the chin, as if prepared to brave the elements on a pedestrian excursion. He thrust his hands in his pockets and walked up and down the room; while his wife, drawn up almost in a knot, seated in a large chair and wrapped in a heavy shawl, seemed quite as suffering as himself.

"Now this is too ridiculous, Fanny. You may have been ashamed to have any one come in before things were cleaned, but I declare I should be a great deal more so to be caught just now. How you look in that great blanket! And I can't say I think this fustian coat particularly becoming or suitable for house wear," he said, stopping and looking at himself in the glass.

"No one will come in such weather," she replied, perfectly satisfied as to their being no chance of being caught; but scarcely had she spoken when there was a most decided ring at the bell, which betokened something more than an errand boy or postman, and a shuffling was heard in the hall as if an umbrella, &c., and presently in was ushered a stranger.

"Ah, Harrington!" exclaimed Mr. Taylor, receiving his guest with great cordiality, "when did you arrive?"

"Only this morning," replied the other, "and wishing to see you particularly, I thought I should find you at home such a stormy afternoon as this. Singular weather for May," he continued. "It's more like November."

"It is indeed," replied Mr. Taylor, somewhat embarrassed, and looking ruefully toward the empty grate. "Fanny, dear, I think you might manage that fire-place so we could have a fire."

But Fanny looked annoyed and hesitatingly said—

"I'm afraid he'll only make it smoke." Whereupon Mr. Harrington protested with chattering teeth that he was not at all cold, and begged that no fire might be kindled on his account. There was no concealing the fact, however, for the whole party looked blue; and after a somewhat short and decidedly uncomfortable visit, Mr. Harrington took his departure.

"He did not stay long at any rate," said Fanny.

"No, indeed!" replied her husband, pettishly, "do you suppose he'd stay and shiver here when he could get away? Poor devil! I do believe he'd have got an ague fit in fifteen minutes more. I declare, Fanny, I was mortified."

"What on earth brought him here?" said Fanny, angry with the man for coming and being uncomfortable. "People have no right to visit in such weather! And what a quantity of dirt he has tracked in!" she continued, with infinite vexation, "my beautiful new matting will be quite spoiled. He might at least have wiped his feet at the door! Dear me! and the hall too! How his umbrella has dripped all over it," and then ringing the bell, she ordered the woman to bring brush and pail, and wipe out all traces of the offending stranger, which operation she

superintended herself, fretting the while, and feeling the whole as a great hardship.

It was happily through at last, however; and as Mr Taylor sat opposite to his wife at the tea-table, somewhat thawed by his second cup, he said—

"Fanny, I must ask Harrington to dinner."

"Must you," she replied, with a sort of deprecating accent, that implied that if the necessity were not very urgent, she would rather dispense with the pleasure.

"Yes," he answered; "have you any objections?"

"No," she replied, reluctantly. "Only I must take down the silver, and it's all so nicely put away in whitening and beaver skin."

"Why can't Tom take it down?" inquired her husband.

"Because he can't," she replied. "I never let any one go to my pantries but myself. No—if you must have him, I must do it myself."

Mr. Taylor seemed annoyed at the idea of giving her what was apparently so much trouble, and yet more annoyed at not treating his friend with hospitality, and he said—

"I do not see why you cannot let one of the servants do it."

"Because I can't, Charles," she pursued, with a true woman's answer. "If you must have him, that's enough."

And so the subject dropped, though the husband had a sort of uncomfortable feeling that he was doing something selfish in being still on "hospitable thoughts intent," in spite of his wife's evident reluctance to it; while she on her part felt as if there was a world of trouble before her, and thought of all her lamps with their fresh wicks, &c.

In fact Fanny took things *hard*. Everything in housekeeping was a labor to her. She trusted nobody. She was satisfied with nothing. Servants were her "natural enemies;" flies her torments; moth her corroding evil; and all the minor ills of life, miseries.

She had been married about two years, and wanted to be, and thought she was, a very good housekeeper, and so she was, if having everything as bright and nice as labor and care could make it, is good housekeeping; but if the term is meant to go a little further and include *comfort*, and as much of happiness as depends upon domestic details, she wofully missed it. When her husband came home of an evening, wearied with the toils and cares of the day, and would gladly have refreshed himself with a little female gossip and lively chit-chat, she generally greeted him with a grave, anxious face, and a long story of some petty domestic annoyance, the history of some housemaid who *would* make up the third story before the second, or use the brooms and pails of either indiscriminately; and the man servant, who, spite of all she could *do* or say, had certain ways of his own of arranging his pantries, that were a source of bitter complaint.

"Well, dismiss them," said Mr. Taylor, impatiently.

"Where's the use," she answered, complainingly, "they are all as bad, one as another. I spent a week in going about making inquiries before I engaged Tom, and he had first rate recommendations—and yet you see what a torment he is. He is so obstinate," and then followed such a list of Tom's moral delinquencies that the only wonder was that Mrs. Taylor was able to keep him for a day.

If Tom's story could have been heard, it would probably have been quite as earnest, and perhaps as reasonable; in which Mrs. Taylor would have figured as the most pertinacious and exacting of housekeepers, "interfering," as Tom thought, "with what did not concern her, for if he did his work well, he had a right to do it in the way he liked best." So no doubt a silent struggle was going on, on Tom's part, as well as his mistress'—for human nature is not all on one side—nor perfection to be bought for any stipulated sum, let it be what it will, per month.

"Where is Mr. Harrington?" she asked, the next day, when her husband returned to dinner.

"He was engaged to day," he replied, "and I asked him for to-morrow."

"Oh, how provoking," she replied, "I thought you meant to bring him to-day."

"I did," he said. "But if the man would not come, I could not make him, you know. But what difference does it make?"

"A great deal," she answered, evidently much annoyed. "I have had the dinner-table set up stairs today, and wanted to get through with it."

"Well, and I wish you would have it so every day, Fanny," said her husband. "You know I hate the basement, particularly as you never will let me bring a stranger down there."

"Now, Charles," she said, imploringly, "how can you ask it? During the winter I am very willing; but in summer with the flies it is really out of the question."

"Then when we have strangers let them dine down there," persisted her husband.

"Oh, that will never do," she replied, "the room is nice enough for us when we are alone; but as to admitting company there, it's impossible."

"It's very hard," he replied, with some vexation, "that I am not able to ask a friend to dinner when I wish it."

"I am sure, Charles," she said, the tears starting to her eyes as she spoke, "I never object to your having your friends when you wish it. You are very unjust."

"If you don't object, Fanny, in so many words," he answered, pettishly, "there's always such a fuss made about it that it amounts to the same thing."

"Fuss!" she repeated, much hurt. "I don't know what you mean by fuss. I only want to know *when* you expect company, and that I am sure is reasonable enough."

"But I tell you I don't always know when myself," he replied, impatiently.

"Well, you need not be angry at my asking," she persisted.

"I am not angry," he replied, in a voice that rather contradicted his words.

Tears were now falling fast from his wife's pretty eyes, and half sorry, and half angry, he said—

"Now what *is* the matter, Fanny?"

"You are very unjust, and very unreasonable," she replied, weeping.

"Very unjust and very unreasonable, Fanny," he

repeated, in his turn both offended and hurt. "I really don't know what I have done or said to merit such reproaches as these."

"It's very hard," she continued, sobbing, "to be called fussy and unkind, because I try to keep things in something like decent order."

"I did not call you either fussy or unkind," he replied—

"Something very like it," she persisted, "you said——"

"I said," interrupted he, "that you made a fuss with having dinner up stairs and all that, when we have company, and that's all I said," he continued, decidedly, and with some temper, "for you *do* make a fuss. But I never said you were unkind, for that you never are."

Fanny, in the midst of her tears, saw that her husband was in earnest, and felt that she had better not push the matter any further, or he might be provoked to assert his will even more decisively, so, still bent upon having her own way, she dried her eyes and only said—

"If Mr. Harrington dines here to-morrow, you had better ask Mr. Morgan to meet him."

"I will," he replied, glad to turn the conversation. "Come, dinner is on table," and they sat down, both rather sorry for the discussion, and resolved to be agreeable and good humored for the rest of the day.

But when people's tempers have been ruffled and their spirits exhausted, it is not very easy always to recover their usual tone immediately; and Fanny, spite of her efforts, could not be gay, while she still heard the word "fussy" ringing in her ears; and Mr. Taylor did not forget at once that he had been called "unreasonable and unjust." So after several vain endeavors at conversation, she fell into a languid silence, and he threw himself upon the sofa in hopes of a nap until the evening papers came in.

No further allusion was made to Mr. Harrington or the basement room. Fortunately a friend or two came in during the evening, and it passed off tolerably cheerfully, though Fanny still went to bed with a weight at her heart, the exact cause of which she could hardly have told, while the long breath she drew at intervals sounded so like a sigh, that her husband felt each as a gentle reproach to himself.

Thus with youth, health, means sufficient, and not a serious care upon earth, our young housekeeper often contrived to feel as sad, and make her husband look as gloomy, as if some real misfortune was hanging over them.

"The Hazards are going to break up housekeeping," said some female gossip, one day, while dining with the Taylors.

"Indeed," said Fanny. "Why is that?"

"They are tired out," replied her friend.

"I am not surprised at it," said Mrs. Taylor—"there is no comfort in it."

"Not in keeping house as Mrs. Hazard does," replied the lady. "I never saw a house in such a condition."

"Ah!" exclaimed Fanny, to whose taste this bit of gossip was peculiarly suited. "How was it?"

"Oh, she attended to nothing," replied her friend. "Everybody did just as they pleased. The servants cleaned when they liked, or left it alone. Mr. Hazard brought in company at all times, and if they had a good dinner, so much the better; and if they had not, they did not seem to think it a matter of any consequence. I never saw people who took things so easily. If any *contretems* happened, which of course they would with such housekeeping, she only laughed. And I really believe there was not a whole set of any thing in the house that matched."

"A charming way of living," said Mr. Taylor. "I wonder Hazard wants to break up."

"Well, it was a pleasant, easy sort of house too," continued their guest; "but Mr. Taylor," she added, smiling, "you can hardly expect us ladies to take the trouble to be good housekeepers if you admire such an establishment as Mr. Hazard's. It is really putting a premium upon bad housekeeping, and you would not find much comfort in that, I assure you."

"I should like to try it at any rate," he replied, with a mixture of truth and playfulness that jarred terribly upon his little wife's feelings. "For I must own," he continued, "that I am heartily sick of such good housekeeping. Indeed," he added, with an expression of earnestness that startled Fanny, "I am seriously thinking of giving up this house when the lease expires, and going to board ourselves."

"Oh, Charles!" she exclaimed, too breathless to say more.

"Why, Fanny," he replied, "it is more for your sake than my own that I would make the change. Your housekeeping is a source of perpetual torment to you, I am sure."

"There are occasionally some annoyances," she said.

"Occasionally!" he continued. "Why I am sure it has been nothing but one continued string of complaints ever since we were married. Precious little comfort have we had in housekeeping."

Fanny was fairly frightened. She turned pale, but tried to laugh as she said—

"And so you want me to keep house like Mrs. Hazard, and not have a whole set of china, nor a dozen glasses that will match."

"Rather that," he replied, resolutely, "than slave yourself and torment me as you do with keeping everything so nice. If I must choose between happiness and order, I should certainly say happiness. *Comfort* seems out of the question in either case."

"It's to be hoped they are not incompatible," said the lady, laughing, but seeing that the conversation touched Mrs. Taylor deeply, and that her voice faltered, and she could with difficulty keep from tears, she changed the subject, and gave the history of some wedding, the lengthy details of which would at any other time have interested Fanny much. But now she could scarce listen with even decent attention. What her husband had said, had sunk deeply in her mind. "That he had had no comfort since he had been married," words that might well weigh heavily on any young wife's heart, and she pondered them in silence, and wept passionately over them when she was alone.

"I will go to Mrs. Ashland," she said to herself;

"her housekeeping seems to go by magic, and I will ask her how she manages."

And so she went the next morning to Mrs. Ashland, who was an old friend she had known from childhood, and to whom, not without tears, she laid open her whole heart and all her troubles.

"My dear child," said her friend, smiling kindly, "you are a very young housekeeper, that is all."

"Well, dear Mrs. Ashland," said Fanny, "tell me what I must do. How am I to manage? I want to make my husband happy; but at the same time, I should like to have something like order and comfort around me. Do tell me how you do."

"In the first place, Fanny," said Mrs. Ashland, "if you take my advice, you will never tell your husband of any of your petty domestic annoyances. He has his own business cares and troubles, and wants to be enlivened with cheerful conversation when he comes home; and from your own account it seems you pour into his weary ears all your little complaints, which sound like something quite serious to his already fagged and jaded spirit, when after all they are but the merest trifles, which it would be better for your own happiness if you dismissed from your own mind. But to treasure them up to repeat to your husband is really an act of more than folly."

"There is a good deal in that to be sure," replied the candid Fanny. "But when I feel so annoyed and provoked, as I am half the time, I cannot help letting him see it."

"But my dear," persisted her friend, "you must not feel so. With youth, health, means, and though last not least, a husband that you dearly love, what right have you to let trifles prey thus upon your happiness."

"But your housekeeping goes on so quietly," urged Fanny, "that it is very easy for you to say so—but if you had such plagues as I have——"

"And pray what plagues have you," said Mrs. Ashland, smiling, "that I have not? Servants who are of the same flesh and blood that you and I are, Fanny—is not that all? You surely cannot expect perfection out of human nature for seven or even ten dollars a month."

"But they are so ignorant and obstinate," replied Fanny. "If they would only *mind* I would not care for the rest."

"Perfect obedience is the most difficult of human virtues, Fanny," returned Mrs. Ashland. "Don't you think if we had the reverse of the medal we might hear complaints equally bitter, and perhaps equally just against mistresses."

"Well," said Fanny, "perhaps so. But your house is always in perfect order—yet you take everything easily. How do you do it?"

"By not *exacting* too much," replied her friend. "By keeping a general superintendence, but not interfering too much with my servants. If they do their work faithfully and well, I let them do it in their own way. And above all, Fanny, take the little *contretems* we must all meet with easily. We have real misfortnnes and serious troubles enough to encounter through the journey of life, without creating them for ourselves in discontented tempers and unhappy households. The first object of good housekeeping is *comfort*, and comfort implies quiet and ease. But above all, my dear child, don't let little things loom into great ones. One must put up with much, and pass over much to get through the world happily."

Fanny took the advice; and has never regretted it.